

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 7.

NEW YORK, MARCH 10, 1899.

Price 5 Cents.

CASE NUMBER TEN; OR THE BRADYS AND THE PRIVATE ASYLUM FRAUD.



Slowly the chemist, Wittman, poured out the deadly poison. But the crashing in of the door revealed Young King Brady, and the old detective's life was saved.

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CASE NUMBER TEN;

OR,

The Bradys and the Private Asylum Fraud

A THRILLING DETECTIVE STORY.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

A STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

OLD KING BRADY, the world famous detective, pulled a notebook from his pocket and carefully scanned its pages.

As his keen gaze ran over the entries he stopped at one of them.

"Case Number Ten," he exclaimed, in a thoughtful manner. "That is the one. I must give that attention at once."

Case Number Ten was, as given in Old King Brady's notebook, a most interesting and remarkable case.

One day while in the office of the chief of the Secret Service he had been given the particulars of a very strange affair.

It was a disappearance.

A very beautiful young lady and an heiress, who was prominent in the highest social circles of Gotham, had vanished from sight as completely as if claimed by the grave.

And for aught that could be discovered an unknown grave might have claimed her.

The smartest detectives in the country had been put on the case.

Nothing resulted.

She was given up by her friends.

Some believed it suicide.

Others mentioned murder.

But whether suicide or murder, no trace of her could be found.

It was a very strange affair.

But one clew was in the possession of the Secret Service chief.

It was a letter.

This purported to come from the young lady herself, and contained but three sentences.

"I am behind bars. Give me help in the name of God. I am sane. VICTORINE LA SALLE."

This message was handed to the chief one dark evening by a withered old hag, just as he was entering his office.

She disappeared before he could question her closer.

It was a surprise to the chief, and he gave it much study.

But the result of all deductions was the same, and this was the conclusion that the message was a hoax, and that Victorine La Salle had not sent it.

The chief turned the affair over to Old King Brady.

The old detective took notes and gave the case some attention at first. But other more important matters coming up he had put it aside for a time.

But now several strange incidents had recalled the case which he had numbered as "ten" in his diary.

These incidents, the product of a case he was working on, had seemed to suddenly connect themselves with Case Number Ten, or the mysterious disappearance of Victorine La Salle.

So this is how we find Old King Brady looking up Case Number Ten in his notebook.

The more the detective studied the matter the better satisfied he became that the strange message had really come from the missing girl.

"This is a case of foul play," he muttered. "That

girl was or is confined somewhere for a purpose by enemies. To find her is to find the key of the Dr. Jacobs case."

The Dr. Jacobs case was one the old detective, assisted by his protege, Young King Brady, had been working on.

Heretofore, for many years, the form of Old King Brady, in its severity of dress and straightness of form, was a well-known figure in the criminal quarters of New York, but he was alone.

In his tight-fitting blue coat, his white hair under the broad-brimmed hat, he was a striking personage.

But now a young man, much of his own type but more slender, was seen with him.

His name was Harry Brady.

He was no blood relation of Old King Brady, though his name was Brady. He had adopted the detective profession from choice.

Old King Brady had taken a fancy to the young detective, and the two had become warm friends.

Old King Brady had done much to assist Harry in the mastering of the profession.

He had given him many points.

These were of value.

Young King Brady was the title he became known by. In a short while he had gained a fame second only to the older detective.

In many points he was fully the equal if not the superior of Old King Brady. But the pair worked in perfect harmony.

So when Old King Brady decided to take up the Victorine La Salle case, as connected with the Dr. Jacobs affair, he hunted up Young King Brady and conferred with him.

An argument followed.

Young King Brady had his idea of the case and the old detective had his.

The young detective never hesitated to honestly question Old King Brady's theories. This secretly tickled the old detective immensely.

Instead of nettling him it pleased him, and he would stand any amount of criticism good-naturedly.

"The boy has a mind of his own," he would mutter with a chuckle. "Independent spirit! That's what a detective wants. He must always stand on his own bottom."

The Dr. Jacobs case was a most peculiar one.

It had baffled the best detectives of the country, and yet remained a mystery.

The charge brought against Jacobs was a very serious one, for it was that of murder.

At first all the evidence seemed against Jacobs.

But after a long trial and much keen detective work the case fell through, and he was acquitted.

But many people still believed him guilty. Exclusive opportunity was one of the charges brought against him.

Anthony Hess was a small broker in Broad street, and lived in sumptuous apartments uptown.

He was the son of Alexander Hess, who had been

married twice. His second wife was a widow, and Victorine La Salle was her daughter.

When Alexander Hess departed this life, he left over one million dollars in trust for Anthony and Victorine. For ten years they were to enjoy the income.

Then, if Victorine did not marry, the estate was to be equally divided and settled.

But should Victorine marry, all the property would revert to Anthony.

In case of the death of either within ten years, the surviving heir was to become sole owner of the estate.

Some people called it a singular will.

A few more distant heirs talked of contesting it, but nothing came of that.

However, a nephew named Jefferson Dale was very bitter against his uncle. He even attempted legal proceedings, but of course in vain.

Dale, who had been an earnest attendant upon Miss La Salle, was now cut by her.

This angered him greatly and being of a sullen, revengeful nature, he was determined to get even in some way.

He even came to blows with Anthony. Of course, should both Anthony and Victorine die, he would be the next heir.

So when Dr. Jacobs was charged with the murder of Anthony Hess, Dale was brought into the case also.

But he easily proved an alibi.

That disposed of him.

The strange death of Anthony Hess was a most peculiar affair.

He had attended a club dinner and drove home in company with Jacobs, who was the family physician.

Anthony complained of a strange feeling in the head, and the doctor ascribed it to the effect of champagne. Whether or not he prescribed for Hess, or gave him medicine in the cab, was the point of contention at the trial.

Jacobs did not get out of the cab when it reached the Hess mansion.

Hess went into the house, and the cabman drove the doctor home. But he had barely entered his house, when a messenger summoned him to the dying bedside of Hess.

Hess was unconscious when Jacobs got there. Other physicians were called in, and everything possible done.

But Hess died within three hours.

He did not once regain consciousness.

His symptoms were so peculiar that the physicians did not attempt a diagnosis, but called for an autopsy. This revealed a startling fact.

Hydrocyanide acid was found in the membranous lining of the stomach. Mr. Hess had taken a large dose of poison.

He had said nothing to the servants upon entering the house, beyond announcing that he was ill.

The theory of suicide did not seem tenable. Dr. Jacobs was called forward at the inquest.

Certain peculiar facts elicited resulted in his arrest and trial.

His story was straightforward.

He denied giving Hess anything while together in the cab. He admitted that Hess had complained of illness.

Nothing could be proved, so he was acquitted. After this Jacobs and Jefferson Dale became inseparable.

This was the case of Dr. Jacobs.

Old King Brady had given it some attention. Now, however, that Victorine La Salle had so mysteriously disappeared, he was sure the two cases were connected.

Case Number Ten, therefore, may be seen to be one of great complexity and enshrouded in mystery.

Not the slightest explanation of the young girl's disappearance could be found.

She had simply dropped from sight.

The world ceased to know her.

Whether she was alive or dead, only an Omnipotent Power could tell, other than her possible abductors.

Old King Brady's closest inquiries revealed only these facts :

She was a young woman of rare intellect and sense, and, therefore hardly liable to temporary or permanent insanity.

She had no known enemies.

She was not the kind to commit suicide.

Where then was the clew ?

Old King Brady considered the abduction theory.

The abductors must have a motive.

What could it be ?

The old detective considered jealousy, personal enmity, and financial gain. The latter motive seemed the only logical one.

Somebody might be scheming for the large fortune which, now that Anthony Hess was dead, was about to become hers according to the will of Alexander Hess.

Who could this be ? The next heir ?

Who was the next heir ?

Mr. Jefferson Dale.

Old King Brady puckered his lips. He drew down the brim of his hat and his keen eyes gleamed.

Mr. Jefferson Dale's lot was now not to be envied. If he was the evil doer he certainly had an implacable foe on his track, a fox in cunning, and a wolf in deadly purpose.

CHAPTER II.

THE DETECTIVES AT THE ASYLUM.

THUS, to the best of our ability, we have stated the main facts and theories of the remarkable Case Number Ten.

Old King Brady had now decided to enter upon the case with all his powers.

Young King Brady was with him.

With this primary, but no less important announce-

ment, we will enter upon the thrilling incidents of our story.

One September day, a carriage drove slowly through a street in upper Harlem.

There was nothing remarkable in the fact alone.

Carriages by the score drove hourly through the thoroughfare. But the appearance of this particular carriage merits attention.

The blinds were closely drawn.

The horses were black and so was the driver, or at least as much as could be seen of his face was of that color.

What was in the carriage ?

Where was it going ?

Why were the blinds drawn ?

These questions occurred in consecutive order to a man who stood just in the shadow of a bit of ledge, which abutted upon the street.

He was tall and dressed in the garb of a mendicant.

But beneath his ragged, tattered hat there was a pair of gleaming eyes.

He watched the carriage intently.

Then he ran out and hobbled along behind it, as if to solicit alms from its occupants; but if it had any, they could not have seen him, for the curtains were drawn.

The black driver never looked back.

He let the horses jog slowly along.

A little ways further was a block of brownstone houses. The middle of the block was divided by a gateway and drive.

A high wall closed this from the view of the street. As the carriage turned into the arch the gate fell open, and then the equipage disappeared from view.

The gate closed behind it.

It was a heavy iron-bossed affair, and by no means easy to open.

The beggar halted here and gazed at the gate. Then he raised his voice in imprecations on the hard-hearted travelers whom he supposed to be in the carriage.

He hobbled close to the gate and even tried it. But it was locked.

While he was thus engaged, a savage looking fellow with a shock of red hair, making a lion-like mane, and with features of a coarse, bloated kind, put his head through a small wicket and shouted :

"Git away from there, ye bag of rags ! If ye don't, I'll come out. Go on yer way !"

"Help a poor beggar !" pleaded the mendicant. "I am hungry !"

"I'll make ye hungry. Git out !"

The mendicant shook his head and indicated his ears. Then he continued his supplications.

"Thunder ! he's as deaf as a post," growled the red-haired fellow. And he made threatening signs to the mendicant.

"What's the matter, Red Uno ?" cried a harsh voice from beyond the gate.

"I don't like ther idee of this beggar hanging around here, doctor!"

"Who is he? A spy do you think?"

Another face appeared at the wicket.

It was the smooth-shaven sensual visage of Dr. Jacobs.

He scowled at the mendicant.

Then he said:

"He's harmless. Shut up the wicket and come with me, Uno. We've got a hard subject to handle to-day."

The wicket closed with a clash.

The mendicant's eyes gleamed.

"Harmless, eh?" he muttered. "We'll see about that, my fine birds. A private insane asylum, eh? That is just a good business for Dr. Jacobs. Ha, ha! How murder will out."

He made a move to pass along the wall beyond the gate.

He stopped short.

A sharp exclamation escaped him.

In an angle of the wall a human form was wedged. He was invisible from the street. How long he had been there was only to be guessed.

For a moment the mendicant stared.

Who was this man?

What was he doing here?

But there was a glance of recognition which passed between them.

"Harry Brady!"

"That's who it is," whispered the man in the crevice. "That's a fine disguise you have."

"Yes," agreed Old King Brady.

For the two Bradys are before the reader.

"I didn't know you. I thought it was a real beggar."

"Good!" laughed the old detective. "But you got this scent before me!"

"I have only just come."

"So have I."

"What do you make of it?"

"Dr. Jacobs is at the bottom of it all. It seems he is the proprietor of several private asylums for the insane," declared Old King Brady.

"That is not generally known."

"No."

"He has seen fit to always keep it a secret."

"He has."

The two detectives were carrying on this conversation in whispers.

"Well," said Young King Brady, "I have shadowed this place for a good while. I always suspected queer work here. Do you think there is any clew here to the mysterious disappearance of Victorine La Salle?"

"What motive would Jacobs have for doing away with her?"

"Somebody else may."

"Who?"

"Any person who might largely benefit by it."

The two detectives exchanged glances.

"Alexander Hess left a large fortune."

"Anthony Hess was poisoned."

"Victorine La Salle has disappeared."

"Who is to claim the million left by her?"

"The next heir."

"And that is——"

"Jefferson Dale!"

Very rapidly the detectives deduced these incontrovertible facts. They could not be impeached, and at once furnished not only motive, but good, logical reason.

"We will look Jefferson Dale over," said Old King Brady, drawing a deep breath. "Now, to find out, if possible, if Victorine La Salle is in this private asylum."

"How will you do that?"

"I shall first employ open means."

"Ah! please explain."

The old detective looked about him.

They were in a very retired spot.

They were hidden from the street by a little patch of shrubs. Above were the iron barred and shuttered windows of the asylum.

Old King Brady pulled off his coat.

Off came wig and whiskers.

Then the tattered trousers followed. All was deftly packed into small compass, and thrust into a small hand bag.

The detective now stood revealed in his own tight-fitting blue coat and dark trousers, his smooth face and slouch hat.

The other battered habiliments had been worn over these.

"Remain here, Harry," said Old King Brady. "I will shortly signal you."

"All right!"

The young detective remained crouching in the angle of the wall. Old King Brady boldly walked across the little plot of green and mounted the stoop of the house.

He rang the bell.

It was a long while before the summons was answered. Then the door opened and a grated door was seen beyond.

A man stood in the doorway.

It was Dr. Jacobs.

He looked keenly at the detective.

Old King Brady asked nonchantly:

"May I ask if this is a private asylum?"

"It is?" replied Jacobs, easily. He was studying the visitor.

"Ah, for the insane?"

"For those afflicted with nervous and mental troubles, yes!"

"Hum! You accept patients for treatment, do you not?"

"We do. Our methods are of the best. We have skilled attendants, and while we do not always effect cure, we guarantee a comfortable home for the afflicted one, for life if need be."

"Do you accept violent patients?"

"Yes, any kind. Our facilities for their treatment are of the best."

"Strait-jacket, padded cell, etcetera?"

"Sometimes those measures are necessary."

"Ah, I see," said Old King Brady, in the same careless, easy way. "It is not so very difficult to lock up any man and make him appear insane, is it? That is to say—perhaps I am blunt, I may put the question in another form: If a man who is really sane is locked up in an asylum, it is sometimes difficult for him to prove his sanity, is it not?"

"Such cases are frequent," replied the doctor, guardedly. "Sometimes people have a relative who is troublesome, and they suspect a hereditary tendency that way and procure treatment for them as a safeguard, on the principle that 'a stitch in time,' and so forth."

"I see!" agreed Old King Brady. "And for that reason the private asylum furnishes a convenient place for disposition of such cases."

"Well, perhaps so. May I ask if you have a relative who requires treatment?"

"I will consider," replied Old King Brady. "But first I would ask a question. One must know that a patient is safe, that he cannot escape!"

"That is assured emphatically."

"You guarantee it!"

"Certainly!"

"In case of death——"

Jacobs bowed and smiled.

"Nature must take her course," he said. "We were all born to die!"

"That is beyond question," agreed Old King Brady. "Now, may I ask, have you many such patients?"

"Quite a few!"

"Do you remember a strange case of disappearance here in New York, a short while ago, a Miss La Salle. Is she not in this house?"

The absolute sang froid of the detective almost disarmed Jacobs.

He started, grew white, then red, and gasped slightly. The answer he made was negative.

But it might as well have been in the affirmative, for the keen eyes under the white hat read the truth in that instant of discomposure.

"What! in this house? Preposterous! Where did you get that idea? Of course she is not."

"I merely asked for curiosity," said Old King Brady, innocently. "I thought perhaps she might have been kidnapped into some such place as this, and held a prisoner under the guise of insanity—that is all."

"What!" gasped Jacobs. "Do you think I keep that sort of a place? Jericho! you assume too much, sir. My asylum is a private home for unfortunates, where they can be sure of gentle treatment and good care."

"Yes, yes, of course," agreed Old King Brady. "That is the way with all of these kind of places. Of course you must keep up the appearance of straight business, and——"

"Straight business!" ejaculated Jacobs, furiously. "Dare you say we do anything else here?"

"Why, of course—you know—don't be so foolish. It's all right; we both know what a private asylum is."

Jacobs looked first astounded, then aghast. Then he stepped forward and asked huskily:

"In the name of justice who are you?"

Old King Brady showed his star.

"My name is Brady—James Brady, detective, if you please," he said, affably.

CHAPTER III.

OLD KING BRADY MAKES A DISCOVERY.

FOR a moment Jacobs was speechless. His face was white and then livid.

"A detective!" he gasped.

"Just so."

"Old King Brady?"

"Some call me that."

"Confound it, why didn't I know you," exclaimed the doctor. "Well, well, you have played a sharp game."

Then his manner changed instantly. His anger and trepidation vanished. The wily rogue recovered himself.

He laughed mirthlessly.

"Well, well," he reiterated, "this is a good joke. I suppose you thought you would trap me. Why, my dear man, there is no trace of Victorine La Salle in my house. I would be glad to have you go all over it with me. If there is a sane person here I should be glad to have you point that one out, and I will open the bars and set him or her at liberty."

The detective looked keenly at Jacobs.

The shrewd doctor showed sincerity.

It was like the old detective to take him at his word.

So he said instantly:

"I accept your offer."

"With one proviso," said Jacobs.

"What?"

"That you exonerate me completely when I have proved to you that all my subjects are legitimate maniacs."

"I will certainly do that."

"Very well. Come in."

Jacobs led the way into a dimly lighted hall. He closed and barred the doors behind them.

"It is a precaution," he said. "If some of our patients should get out they would make a great deal of trouble."

"No doubt," said the detective, dryly.

"Now," said Jacobs, earnestly, "I am a very much traduced man. There are evilly disposed persons who have seen fit to circulate black and evil stories against me. There is no foundation in them."

"In the first place, my asylum is at regular intervals inspected by the State Board of Examiners."

"If I had any case in my asylum about which there

was the least doubt they would deprive me of my license and hurry me into court.

"So you see it is impossible for me to conduct an irregular business. Now I will convince you that Victorine La Salle is not in my place.

"In the first place, she did not develop violent insanity when she left home, did she? All my female patients would tear your eyes out if they could get at you."

Old King Brady was fair-minded.

He was willing to admit that he would not expect to find Victorine La Salle violently insane.

From one cell to another they passed.

There were twenty-five patients in the asylum. They were of both sexes and of various ages, from twelve years up to seventy.

There were three young women of Victorine's age.

But Old King Brady could not identify one of these as Victorine La Salle.

Moreover, each was beyond all doubt hopelessly mad. They were even violent in their actions.

The old detective was astonished.

He went all over the place.

Dr. Jacobs, as suave and polite as one could wish, allowed him to penetrate to every part of the place.

So far as could be seen, it was well appointed, in perfect order, and a model of the kind.

The detective was puzzled.

But he was not satisfied.

Despite all that he had seen, he felt sure that there was an undercurrent somewhere. There was a mystery.

He could not help but identify Dr. Jacobs with the murder of Anthony Hess.

He identified him with the disappearance of Victorine La Salle. But he had as yet not an ounce of evidence.

So, far from throwing him off the track, this inspection of the asylum only seemed to confirm his suspicions.

"Now," said the polite doctor at the door, "I trust I have disabused your mind of the unjust suspicions against me."

"Have you branches of this asylum?" asked the detective.

"Yes," replied Jacobs, promptly. "Two other places. One in Westchester, and the other in New Jersey, near Clifton."

"Good-day," said Old King Brady.

But just as he was going out of the door, a carriage drew up at the curb and a man leaped out.

Jacobs' face lit up.

It was Jefferson Dale.

Up the steps he came.

He stared at Old King Brady.

Then he scowled.

The detective very coolly passed him slowly down the steps. Dale made a sign to Jacobs, who grinned.

Then both went in.

Old King Brady was also smiling.

"Ah!" he mused with a sense of humor. "Mr.

Dale comes here, does he? Very good friends they are. Dr. Jacobs thinks he has completely thrown me off the track.

"Very good, my dear doctor. The truth is you have only put me the more effectually on to your trail.

"I am now better assured than ever that you are crooked. I don't care if you can show twenty-five legitimate maniacs. There is something underneath. I am not so easily fooled. I mean to go underneath."

Old King Brady saw that Young King Brady was no longer in the angle of the wall.

Nor was he anywhere to be seen.

"Humph!" muttered the old detective. "He must have got a new scent. I hope he has."

Old King Brady walked down the street and turned into a side avenue.

The day was at its close, and darkness was fast coming on.

Old King Brady paused in the avenue.

He looked about him.

Just across the street was a vacant tool house. The workmen, who had been repairing the streets, were gone home for the day.

Old King Brady slipped across and into the structure.

He made sure nobody had seen him.

Then he swiftly changed his disguise.

He became now once more the mendicant who had first appeared at the asylum gate.

He went slowly back into the street he had just left, and saw that Dale's carriage still stood before the door.

He loitered along the street aimlessly, and importuned a few passersby for coins.

Suddenly, the detective made a queer discovery. It puzzled him.

A young man, tall and handsome, and well dressed was hovering in a doorway opposite the asylum.

By watching his actions Old King Brady became assured that he was watching the asylum.

This was odd.

Who was the youth?

For such he was.

Old King Brady was bound to investigate. He walked in a shuffling way by the doorway.

The youth's gaze rested upon him.

An inspiration seemed to seize him.

He stepped out.

"Here, my man!" he said, brusquely. "Come here a moment."

The mendicant shuffled forward.

"Do you want to make a dollar?"

The beggar gave a chuckle.

"I hain't seen a dollar in a year," he croaked.

"I'd stand on my head fer that."

"Well, it's yours," said the youth, earnestly, "if you can tell me what sort of a house that is over there."

Old King Brady squinted his eyes at the house.

"What—that house with the arched gate in the wall?"

"Yes, yes!" said the youth, eagerly.

"Must be you're a stranger here," said the mendicant, curiously. "Didn't ye ever hear of Dr. Jacobs, the man that was tried for poisoning Anthony Hess?"

"Dr. Jacobs!" exclaimed the youth, with much agitation. "Is that really his house?"

"I reckon it is."

"Tell me, is it a house of good character?"

The mendicant grinned.

"It's an insane asylum," he said.

The youth gave a gasping cry and reeled back and forth like one in a fit. It was some moments before he recovered himself.

"An insane asylum!" he exclaimed. "Are you sure of that?"

"In course I am."

"And are mad people kept there?"

"Sure."

"Is—is it known to the authorities?"

"Certainly."

For some moments the youth was silent. Then he pressed a banknote into the detective's hand.

"You have given me good information," he said. "Can you give me more?"

"Depends on what it is."

"Do you know any of the attaches of the place, or is there any way you could find out if a young girl like this is confined there?"

The youth displayed a photograph.

Old King Brady gave a mighty start.

He recognized the sweet face in the photograph. He had seen the original often driving on Fifth avenue in her carriage.

It was the likeness of Victorine La Salle.

The old detective was astounded.

He looked at the picture.

Then he looked keenly at the youth.

He had never seen him before.

But he saw that his features were clean cut as if they were a cameo. His eyes were fearless and honest.

"Take back your money," said the detective, in a changed voice.

He thrust the bank note into the youth's hand. The latter was startled.

He stared at the detective.

"What is the matter?" he asked. "Is it not enough?"

"Too much," replied Old King Brady. "Who are you and what is your name?"

The youth looked at the pseudo mendicant keenly.

Something in the old detective's gaze impelled him to make reply:

"My name is Ulric Hayne."

"Ulric," repeated the detective. "A good name. Do you know Victorine La Salle?"

"I ought to. She was my betrothed wife."

In an instant the expression of the detective's face

changed. He read the whole truth. He saw now clearly why this handsome young man was so much interested in the asylum.

"Ulric," he said, quietly, "you have struck a friend."

"A friend!" repeated Ulric, in a puzzled way. "Who are you?"

"I am on the same trail that you are. I am also searching for Victorine La Salle!"

Ulric stared in amazement.

"Who are you?" he repeated.

The detective showed his star.

"I am Old King Brady, detective."

With a sharp cry Ulric Hayne caught the detective's sleeve. He scanned his face eagerly, and said:

"You are disguised?"

"Yes."

"And—you are also watching this asylum across the street? You are looking for Victorine La Salle? This is good news. Tell me what you have learned of her fate?"

Before the detective could reply the door of the mansion opposite opened and Jefferson Dale came down the steps.

CHAPTER IV.

YOUNG KING BRADY'S DARING WORK.

LET us follow the adventures of Young King Brady.

The elder detective had left him as we know in the angle of the asylum wall to await his return.

But an incident occurred, which induced Young King Brady to do a little detective work on his own hook.

After Old King Brady had been admitted to the asylum, as we have seen by Dr. Jacobs, the young detective for awhile remained crouching in the shadow.

The sun was settling fast in the western sky, and evening was not far distant.

This fact partly shaped Young King Brady's plans.

Just beyond the big gate there was a wire-screened window. It evidently led or looked out from a basement or cellar.

While the detective was in waiting, a coal wagon drove up slowly.

The driver descended and went to the wicket in the big gate. He pressed a button, which rang a distant bell.

Young King Brady watched him intently. In response to the bell presently the wicket opened, and the red head of Uno was thrust out.

"Well, what do ye want?" he growled.

"Coal!" retorted the driver, gruffly.

"Oh, coal is it? Wait a bit!"

Uno opened the wicket gate and slipped out. He went to the screened window and removed the screen.

"Ye can put it in here," he said, "I'll go in and unfasten the window."

Uno disappeared through the gate. A few moments

later the coal driver had placed his shaft into the window and emptied the coal into the cellar.

Young King Brady watched him.

Suddenly, he chanced to look upward.

He was at a point where he could see a distant upper window of the asylum.

It was barred.

Suddenly, at these bars there appeared the face of a beautiful young girl.

Terror was depicted upon her fair countenance and she wrung her hands wildly. At that moment she saw the detective looking up at her.

The effect was startling.

Her eyes seemed to suddenly light with instant hope. She made signs with her hands excitedly.

The young detective gazed as if fascinated. His blood tingled.

The woman did not look insane.

He did not know Victorine La Salle by sight, but this might easily be her so far as beauty went.

He saw what seemed to him a thrilling fact. A fair young woman was imprisoned in this horrible bedlam against her will.

It aroused the young detective.

He made reassuring gestures.

Then suddenly she disappeared.

Young King Brady was now ready for anything. He looked up to the front entrance of the asylum.

Old King Brady had not yet reappeared.

Would he discover the captive young girl and effect her rescue?

Young King Brady did not believe it.

He did not believe that Jacobs would allow the old detective to see her. Of course he would keep her hidden if it was indeed the missing heiress.

In that case a daring move was necessary in order to effect her rescue.

Young King Brady did not think of calling officers and invading the place.

This would be futile.

Before the officers could complete a surrounding of the establishment and consequent rescue, the wily keepers would find a way to secrete or do away with Victorine.

Young King Brady therefore resolved to trust wholly to his own resources.

An idea occurred to him.

He looked back, and saw that the driver of the coal cart had finished his work.

He had emptied his cart and was driving away.

The window yet remained open.

Of course it would not remain so for long. Red Uno, the watch dog of the asylum, would soon return and close it.

There was a chance of discovery.

Young King Brady knew that it would be a desperate thing for him to be caught in the asylum.

Its secrets were jealously guarded.

He probably would not be allowed to escape alive. It would be like venturing into a trap of death.

But if Victorine La Salle was in the place, and she

was to be rescued, there was no other way. Chances must be taken.

So he hesitated no longer.

He glided to the window.

He made sure nobody was looking. Then he knelt down and looked into the cellar.

The drop was a dozen feet into darkness, but he saw a heap of coal just beneath him.

Down into this he lightly slid.

Of course he made some noise. The coal rattled and he stumbled over the edge of the bin, and fell flat onto the flagging of the cellar.

As he did so he heard a distant door open, and a burst of discordant song came to his ears.

He recognized the voice of the fellow Red Uno.

He came into the cellar.

Young King Brady crouched against the side of the bin.

The darkness saved him.

Red Uno actually brushed against him as he reached up and closed the window.

The detective quivered with the desire to spring up and throttle the villain, but he knew this would not be wise.

"Curse that blockhead of a coal heaver," muttered Uno. "He has filled up the corners of the window with coal grit."

He brushed this out and again closed the window with a bang. This time he locked it.

Then he turned and went out of the cellar. A distant door banged behind him.

The detective drew a breath of relief.

He arose and stood on his feet.

In a few moments his eyes became accustomed to the gloom of the place. Then he saw the great cellar about him.

There were barrels and boxes and chests and crates. A bulkhead door led out into the main yard.

But the passage taken by Uno undoubtedly led up into the asylum proper. Young King Brady followed the passage until he came to a door.

This he opened and saw a flight of stairs.

They were dingy and dirty and apparently led up into the kitchen or scullery above.

The clatter of dishes and murmur of voices told him this.

The place was probably at this hour filled with servants.

It would be useless to attempt further exploration in that direction just now. So he crept back to the cellar.

One more discovery interested him.

A large dumb waiter was in the cellar. It doubtless connected with all the upper stories of the house.

What was more, it was a large one and could easily hold the body and weight of a heavy man.

Young King Brady noted this.

Then he found that the only other exit was the bulkhead.

This led out into the yard.

He crawled up the stone steps and looked out

through a crevice. He could see a large walled-in yard quite plainly.

The carriage which had entered the place was still in the yard.

But the horses had been removed and the driver was busy currying them. A couple of strong brutish looking men were engaged in twisting rope.

The detective took all this in with a careful scrutinizing glance.

Then he looked up to the windows in that wing of the asylum which he could see.

He could locate quite easily the window at which he had seen the young girl who had signaled him.

He saw that this was in the third story and the window was the fourth from the end of the wing. It was barred with iron like all the rest.

To reach it from the yard seemed a sheer impossibility without the aid of a ladder.

The roof of the building was flat and a high screen extended around its edge.

Young King Brady impressed these observations indelibly on his mind.

Then he slid back into the cellar.

He found a comfortable hiding-place behind some barrels.

Here he waited.

Time passed slowly.

A number of people came into the cellar at different times. Red Uno came in frequently.

After a time, however, darkness came and Young King Brady knew that it was the close of day.

It was tedious, indeed, for the young detective and the hours went slowly. But he believed that the ends gained would justify the means employed.

So he was patient.

After what seemed an eternity, the house grew quiet upstairs.

Young King Brady felt the hands of his watch.

It was eleven o'clock.

"One more hour!" he muttered.

He thought of Old King Brady, and wondered what his mission had gained. He knew that the old detective would wonder what had become of him.

Slowly the hours passed.

Midnight came.

Young King Brady arose.

The time for action was at hand.

He felt that the coast was clear. He crept out of his concealment. All was quiet overhead.

Drawing a dark lantern from his pocket, Young King Brady lit it.

He made his way through the passage to the stairs.

Up these he went, and placed a hand on the knob of the kitchen door. He turned it silently.

The door was locked.

Young King Brady examined the lock.

He saw that it was of the ordinary pattern. He drew a bunch of skeleton keys from his pocket.

He pushed out the key on the other side. Then very dexterously he succeeded in picking the lock.

For it must be known that detectives are as expert

at this sort of thing as the cracksmen whom they pursue.

The kitchen door opened and Young King Brady glided into the room. He flashed the rays of the lantern about.

He saw that a number of doors led from this room into other parts of the house. He was not long in deciding which to take.

He opened one which led into a long dining room.

Through this room he silently crept.

He closed each door behind him, but at the other end of this room a door stood open.

And Young King Brady looked out into a wide hall. As he did so he saw a light which seemed to emanate from a side room.

At once the detective closed the slide of his lantern.

Like a shadow he crept toward the open door of the lighted room, from which voices were issuing.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEADLY SERUM.

ALTHOUGH he did not suspect it, Young King Brady was upon the eve of a discovery which was to lead to the exposure of one of the most diabolical pieces of villainy of modern times.

The young detective crept very carefully and silently into the shadows opposite the open door.

Here, in the folds of a heavy orris, he could see the interior of the room and not be seen.

It was richly furnished.

It held two occupants.

Both were men.

One of them the young detective recognized at once. It was Dr. Jacobs, the keeper of the asylum.

The other man was tall, spare featured, with a long beard.

He had the air of a professional man.

Who he was, Young King Brady did not know. He could only guess.

The two men were leaning over the table in earnest conversation.

Jacobs was smoking.

In his hand he held a bottle. It contained some peculiar colored liquid.

"I'll give you a thousand dollars cash for the formula of this preparation," said Jacobs, carelessly.

"Ten thousand would not buy it," replied the man with the beard.

"Humph! That is a pretty big statement, Wittman," said Jacobs.

"I don't care if it is," said the man called Wittman; "it is making your fortune, and you know it."

"And making a good thing for you."

"Perhaps; but you know I am the goose that furnishes you with golden eggs."

"Well, I'll come to your terms. Continue to supply me with the stuff, and you shall have the increase of royalty."

"That settles it. By the way!"

"Well?"

"How about that old banker, Wells of Forty-fourth street? His nephew wants him put in a safe place."

"I've seen that young fellow, and am making a deal with him."

"Good! There ought to be some money there."

"If everything works right I'll squeeze the young fool for fifty thousand."

"That's a modest sum."

"It's all there is in it and not to be sneezed at. It can't be picked up every day."

"Well, that is true. Now a poor chemist like myself would be well satisfied with a good deal less."

"That is the difference between a chemist and a doctor."

"One makes the poisons and gets nothing, the other administers them and gets everything."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha!"

The two villains laughed.

Young King Brady was all attention.

He knew that there was a deep significance in these words. So Wittman was a chemist.

He made a mental note of this.

Wittman and Jacobs laughed loudly and hilariously. A seeming echo came from the upper part of the house.

It was followed by a hideous roar like the raving of a wild beast.

Young King Brady shivered.

It was an unpleasant feeling.

He knew what that sound was. It was the cry of a maniac who had heard the laughter, and was excited by it.

Jacobs sprang up angrily.

He opened the door into the hall.

"Uno!" he cried loudly.

"Yes, sir," came back the answer.

"Who made that noise?"

"Patient number nine, sir."

"Well, give him the braid, and if he don't become docile put the strait-jacket on him."

A horrible chuckle came back.

"All right, sir."

The heavy footsteps of the keeper Uno were heard in the corridor above.

The rattle of bolts and the clang of an iron door was heard.

Then Young King Brady listened with freezing veins to what followed.

The sound of blows, and cries like those of a lost spirit. Awful, anguished, thrilling cries of agony.

"My God!" groaned Young King Brady. "This is a literal edition of Inferno!"

And indeed this seemed true enough. An ordinary madhouse is a terrible place, but this den of Dr. Jacobs' was fearful.

Finally the blows ceased and all was silence above. Then the iron door clanged and the detective heard Uno's footsteps again.

He knew what that silence meant.

The defenseless maniac had been beaten into insensibility.

It was a horrible contemplation.

But Wittman and Jacobs had resumed their conversation.

"I don't think we work this thing right," the chemist continued. "We should go into equal partnership."

"Partnership?"

"Yes!"

"How do you make that out?"

"Well, easy enough. You must admit the justice of it. Without me, you could not exist."

"Hum! perhaps not. I might, however, invent a formula as good as yours."

"That is impossible."

"You think so?"

"I know it."

"How do you speak so positively?"

The chemist arose and paced the floor.

As he did so, he passed into the detective's full view. Young King Brady marked him well.

He was resolved to know him, no matter where he should see him again.

"Well, I only discovered it by an accident. I was experimenting with live rabbits for serum, from which to manufacture a taxine cure for consumption."

"Ah!"

"I derived this serum from a series of processes, with which I will affirm no other chemist in the world is familiar."

"Very good!"

"The serum is of the most powerful of materials and composition. By accident I stumbled upon it But, though I missed the end I sought, I stumbled upon a greater."

"Go on!"

"I found by inoculating a live, healthy rabbit with this serum, insanity of the most violent type could be produced."

Young King Brady listened to this, and a cold sweat broke out upon him.

He saw the whole diabolical game.

Jacobs not only kept a private asylum for insane patients.

But he also was in collusion with a chemist whose knowledge of his art had enabled him to manufacture a deadly inoculating fluid, with which he could produce violent insanity.

It was easy to read the rest.

Some wealthy villain wished to dispose of a relative or a foe.

He employed Jacobs who managed in some way to prescribe for the person in question. That person's system received the deadly lymph or serum.

The result was awful to contemplate.

From a state of health he or she was at once transformed into a raving maniac. This filled Jacobs' asylum and his pocket.

The chemist pocketed his liberal fee.

No doubt everyone of the poor suffering wretches

"Yes, so to speak."

"In that case, Victorine well or insane is in that house."

"Insane!" gasped Ulric. "Surely you do not consider such a possibility?"

"If she is not, she will be if she stays in that place a great while. It is a horrible bedlam."

"My soul!" gasped the youth. "She must be rescued. We must do something desperate."

"Shall we shadow Dale?"

The villain had entered his carriage and was being driven away. Ulric looked astonished.

"Shadow him?"

"Yes!"

"What would we gain?"

"Perhaps a clew to Victorine!"

"Do you think so?"

"Why, if our theories are correct, he knows her present whereabouts, dead or alive."

Ulric shuddered.

"I am convinced she is somewhere in that asylum," he said. "Can we not force an entrance?"

Old King Brady shrugged his shoulders.

"I believe that has been done," he said.

Ulric looked amazed.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "What do you mean?"

"I believe my compatriot detective is at this moment within those walls."

"Whom did you say?"

"Harry Brady, or as some are pleased to call him, Young King Brady!"

Ulric was more than surprised.

"What?" he whispered, eagerly. "Have you good reasons for thinking that?"

"He was here a few moments ago engaged in shadowing the place with me," said Old King Brady.

"He has disappeared. He would not leave. I believe he has gained an admittance."

"Would he risk that?"

"Would he? There is little doubt he would welcome the risk."

Ulric was very much excited.

"In that case," he said, "we had better wait here until we hear from him."

"We will gain more I think, by remaining about the asylum. As you are not in disguise it would be well for you to keep in the shadows and out of sight."

"Very well, I will remain in this doorway until something turns up. Ah, what is this?"

A carriage came up the street rapidly driven.

It was now quite dusk. Old King Brady limped out to the curb.

The carriage was closed and the curtains were drawn.

It drew up in front of the asylum gate. Again Uno, the keeper, appeared and admitted it.

The carriage passed through, the gate closed, and then fearful yells were heard from beyond the gate.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Ulric. "What does that mean?"

"It means that they have just brought in a new patient," said Old King Brady.

"A new patient?"

"Yes."

At that moment the detective caught sight of something which interested him.

The little wicket window in the gate had been left open.

The detective motioned to Ulric.

"Come!" he said; "let us look through there. We may see what is going on."

"Good!" whispered the young lover; "I am with you."

Together they flitted across the street.

They reached the gate.

It was easy to look through the wicket. The scene which they beheld was an enlivening one.

The carriage was a couple of hundred feet away from the gate, and drawn up before some steps leading into the building.

The driver's back was turned to the gate. The carriage door was open.

Two men in the uniform of the asylum had sprung out and were struggling with a third.

The maniac was a powerful built, elderly man. He fought so savagely that Uno had to assist.

After a fierce struggle the maniac was forced into the house.

"Another victim," whispered Old King Brady.

"Poor soul! he is going to a hard place," said Ulric.

"Indeed, he is!"

Then the detective conceived a most daring plan. It entered his head like a flash.

The shadows were now quite deep.

There was no person in the asylum yard but the coachman, and his back was turned to the gate.

"Ulric," said Old King Brady, "are you ready for hot work?"

"Anything," replied the young lover, eagerly. "What is it?"

"Can you get through this wicket?"

"Climb into the yard?"

"Yes!"

Ulric stared at Old King Brady.

"Do you mean it?"

"I do! But wait!"

The old detective put his head and shoulders through the wicket. Then he saw that the bolt which fastened the gate could be reached.

Quick as a flash he reached down and shot it back.

The gate slowly and silently swung back a couple of feet. The two men quickly slid into the yard.

Old King Brady then closed and barred the gate. They stood a moment in the shadows.

It was plain that they had not been seen. A great point was gained.

They were in the asylum yard, but it was not wise to remain long in the open. Old King Brady saw

upstairs had been once healthy, sane people. They were made insane in this diabolical manner.

Words are not too strong to brand these consummate, scheming villains. The gallows was their deserving fate.

As the full horror of this discovery dawned upon the young detective, he clenched his hands and whispered :

"They shall hang. The world must be rid of such fiends. That shall be my business to hang them."

But first he knew he must entrap them.

There was not evidence enough as yet to permit of his making an arrest. The outward guise of respectability was too strong for that.

But he knew that this was bound to come in time.

The two villains continued their conversation. Though allied in their one purpose, Young King Brady saw that they were not bound by any other tie.

Each distrusted the other.

Each knew the other to be a murderer.

If Jacobs had Wittman's secret, he would very quickly throw him over.

But he had it not.

Therefore, he was dependent upon the chemist. On the other hand, the chemist had no other market for his serum.

"Then," continued Jacobs, "you will never part with the secret of your formula?"

"Never! It would be of no use to do so."

"Why?"

"Because I could not so write out the directions for its manufacture that anybody else could make it. The various processes are complicated."

"Ah, I see."

Jacobs' cruel shifting gaze moved about the room.

Had Wittman been able to give him the directions so that he could make the serum himself, Jacobs would have endeavored to gain them.

But he could not do so.

So he abandoned that theory.

Yet it was plain that this alliance with the chemist was to him most obnoxious. He would gladly have abandoned it.

Wittman now prepared to leave.

"When you want to see me," he said, in parting, "you will find me at my laboratory downtown."

"Very well," replied Jacobs.

He escorted Wittman to the door.

In a few moments he returned.

"Uno!" he called.

"Ay, sir," replied the keeper, from the corridor above.

"All quiet up there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am going to retire."

"All right, sir."

Jacobs passed into the library again and turned down the lights. Then he passed into a small inner room and closed the door.

Young King Brady crawled out from his cramped position.

He crept into the library and looked about. On the table were scattered some papers.

He looked at them.

They were of no importance.

He had hoped that a phial of the poison serum was left on the table.

But it was not.

Search did not result in such a discovery. The young detective now did some thinking.

What should be his next move?

Was Victorine La Salle in the place?

If so, was she a maniac? Had she been inoculated with the deadly serum?

He could not believe it.

It did not seem logical that so young and beautiful a personage should be so harshly treated. He would rather believe that she was kept a simple captive there.

This was his hope.

But now to make an extended search of the house, and to, if possible, find her.

Once found, he felt sure of devising a means of rescue. This gave him no apprehension whatever.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD KING BRADY PUSHES THE CASE.

LEAVING Young King Brady to continue further exploration of the asylum, let us return to Old King Brady and Ulric Hayne.

We left the old detective and the young lover just as Jefferson Dale emerged from the asylum and entered his carriage.

"Ah!" exclaimed Ulric with darkening brow. "There is the man whom I believe to be at the bottom of all."

"Jefferson Dale?"

"Yes, you know him?"

"I do!"

"He will now inherit Victorine's wealth. That is, assuming that she is dead. I will not assume that, however."

"If it were true——"

Ulric clenched his hands.

"That is the man I believe to be her murderer in that case. I would follow him to the death."

"I could not blame you," said Old King Brady. "But for the present it is better to do him no personal harm!"

"I do not intend to."

"Good! Now, the question is, what is his business with Dr. Jacobs?"

"I have a theory."

"Indeed!"

"I believe he is responsible for Victorine's disappearance. Dr. Jacobs is the man whom he has employed to put her out of the way."

"A good assumption," agreed Old King Brady. "You think then that Dale is in the doctor's clutches?"

that a heap of boxes and barrels lay against the inner wall.

He silently motioned to Ulric.

Then both crept behind these.

They were in deep shadows now, and there was little danger of discovery. The possibilities of this new move were not to be enumerated in words.

The two interlopers kept dark and silent. The keepers finally returned to the yard after the incarceration of the new patient in his cell.

They were shouting and laughing in a coarse and ribald way.

The gate was opened and the carriage drove away. Then Red Uno and his companions went into the house.

The coast was clear.

This time, however, Uno had closed and locked the wicket. Old King Brady and Ulric could not get out now if they wished to.

But they did not wish to.

The old detective had some daring plans.

"Ulric," he said, "if you are afraid, I hope you will express yourself now. We have some hot work before us!"

"I will go wherever you go," said Ulric, firmly. "I am not afraid."

"I mean to go through this asylum to-night," said Old King Brady.

"Through the asylum?"

"Yes!"

"Good! If Victorine is in the place, then we shall find her!"

"Surely!"

"Then I am with you to the death," declared Ulric, firmly.

It was now pitch dark in the yard, except the radius of light from a red globe over a rear door.

At times, however, some of the servants or keepers came into the yard.

So Old King Brady did not deem it safe for them to leave the spot where they were hiding until later.

Time passed slowly.

But at length it became evident that those in the rear part of the house at least had retired for the night.

Old King Brady now felt that it was safe for him to act.

So he slipped out from behind the pile of boxes and barrels.

Ulric followed him.

They crossed the yard to the rear entrance to the house. All was silent and dark.

The coast seemed clear.

But to make sure Old King Brady visited the stables and examined the ell of the house and the windows. These were fastened tightly.

Entrance in that way was out of the question.

This he decided.

But he was not dismayed.

What the interior of the building was he could only

guess. He imagined, however, that most of the lunatics were confined in the wing.

In that event, it was the part of the house to which he must pay his attention.

For in it he knew that he would be likely to find Victorine La Salle.

So he did not attempt to gain entrance to the main body of the house. He knew that if Young King Brady had gained an entrance, which he fancied that he had, it was doubtless to the main house.

The old detective examined the wing as carefully as he could in the dark.

Then he whispered:

"Ulric, are you a good climber?"

"I can climb," replied the young man.

"Good. I am heavier than you, and might break that gutter pipe, but if you can climb up it to the roof of the stable, I believe we can get on to the roof of the house."

Ulric felt of the water pipe.

It seemed firm.

It was of steel, and firmly riveted into the brick wall.

"I will try it," he said; "but are you coming up also?"

"Yes."

"How will you do it?"

The detective drew from his pocket a long and slender rope. It occupied but a small compass.

"This is a rope of silk," he said. "It is hardly larger than a string, but it is strong. Lower that to me from the roof. Take a turn about the chimney with it and I will do the rest."

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE ASYLUM.

ULRIC HAYNE needed no second bidding.

He understood the plan at once, and lost no time in embracing it. He went up the water pipe like a monkey.

Up he went and gained the roof.

It was a flat roof.

Then he lowered the silk rope.

Old King Brady had knotted loops in it for his feet, and he came up hand over hand very easily.

Both were now on the stable roof.

Old King Brady knotted the silk rope and stowed it away in his pocket.

By standing on a window ledge Ulric could reach the coping of the roof of the wing.

He drew himself up and gained that roof. Old King Brady showed surprising agility and followed him.

As Old King Brady had imagined, there was a skylight in the room.

Silently both crept toward this.

The old detective now drew out and lit his dark lantern.

With it he proceeded to examine the skylight. Below it he saw a flight of stairs.

It was an easy matter to extract a pane of glass and open the skylight.

Then the detective sent the rays of the dark lantern down into a bare and cheerless garret chamber.

It was unoccupied.

Silently the two midnight prowlers lowered themselves into it.

A door in the garret was fastened.

Old King Brady examined the lock.

He found that it was not a difficult matter to pick it and he did so.

Opening this door, which creaked a little, another flight of stairs was seen. This, no doubt, led into the upper story of the wing.

"Ah!" whispered the old detective. "Now, we have the trail."

Silently they crept down these stairs.

At their base the dark lantern was dispensed with as a guide.

Dim lights burned in a long corridor. On either side of this corridor were grated iron doors.

These were, no doubt, the cells of the insane patients. All seemed quiet, but as the two invaders started to creep along the corridor, a heavy body came crashing against the grating of one of these doors.

A hoarse, croaking voice cried :

"The devil will overpower Gabriel yet. Ah, see him, see him now riding his black horse. He is all fire and brimstone."

Instantly screeches and hisses came from another cell, and bedlam was loose.

It for a moment startled and jarred the nerves of the detective and his companion.

But another incident of far more serious import now diverted their attention.

The sound of distant feet rushing upstairs was heard, and a savage voice :

"Shut up your racket, you hell-hounds! Shut up your noise!"

It was Red Uno, the keeper.

Instantly the uproar ceased.

The poor, benighted souls were not so far lost that they did not feel fear for this arbitrary monster.

The detective and Ulric had just time to dodge into the dark stairway.

Uno came raging through the corridor, lashing a whip right and left.

"What do ye mean by such a racket?" he yelled. "Keep quiet now, or I'll skin ye alive, every one of ye. Hear me!"

Silence at once ensued.

The brute walked up and down the corridor several times.

It did not occur to him once to look into the dark stairway.

If it had he would have made a startling discovery. But that discovery might have cost him a fit of insensibility.

For Old King Brady held a club in his hand ready to knock him down.

Uno had started to leave the corridor, when the detective and his companion received a shock. At that moment they gave themselves up for lost.

One of the maniacs had crept to the door of his cell. He said in a wheedling voice :

"Listen, good Uno, I am sane now. There are two strange men hiding in this corridor."

For a moment Ulric and Old King Brady gave themselves up for lost.

They forgot, however, that it was a maniac who had tried to betray them, and that the savage keeper would not accept the statement as true.

"Don't ye lie to me, ye cur!" yelled Uno, cracking his whip in the lunatic's face.

With a yell of pain and terror, the madman retreated to the depths of his cell.

Then Uno went back downstairs.

Silence again reigned.

This time Old King Brady and Ulric had no trouble in going through the corridor without exciting any demonstration on the part of the lunatics.

They cowered in their cells like whipped creatures, and only stared blankly as Old King Brady focused the dark lantern on each in turn.

The detective began his search at the lower end of the corridor.

He went through every cell.

But in none of them did he find a woman.

There were young, middle aged and old men, but not a woman.

The old detective drew one conclusion from this at once.

This was no doubt the male ward of the asylum. There must be female patients, but they were undoubtedly in a ward by themselves.

Where could this be?

Was it in the main house?

There was yet another floor below this, where he could already hear patients raving and groaning.

To get to this floor it was necessary to descend stairs at the end of the corridor.

Old King Brady paused.

He considered the chances.

Then he decided to wait.

No doubt, after midnight, the attendants would be most of them asleep. This would afford greater safety.

He imparted this to Ulric.

Then he looked at his watch.

It was slightly after eleven.

"Ulric," he whispered, "I think we had better remain in hiding until after midnight, or until the house becomes quiet."

"So do I, sir!" agreed Ulric.

So they went back to the stairs and waited. It was about this time, it will be remembered, that Young King Brady was coming out of hiding in the cellar.

Of course, neither detective really knew of the presence of the other in the house.

How this was afterwards discovered we shall now proceed to relate.

The time passed until midnight came and went. A number of times Uno passed through the corridor, quieting some of the patients. But he did not discover the two men hiding on the stairs, though he passed very near to them.

It was well for him that he did not.

The detective was ready for him.

One o'clock came.

This was about the time that Wittman left the house.

Jacobs had retired to his room, and Uno was preparing to retire also. It was at the time that Young King Brady was examining the papers on the table in the library below.

At this point let us leave Old King Brady and Ulric for a time, and return to the younger detective.

Young King Brady crept to the door of the library and listened.

For a long while he listened there.

Then, shadow-like, he flitted across the great hall.

He placed his ear to the door of the room into which Jacobs had gone.

He could hear the asylum proprietor moving about. He applied his eye to the keyhole.

This satisfied him.

He saw that he was preparing to retire. The coast was now clear.

The young detective turned and crept to the bottom of the staircase. Here he listened intently again.

Of course the sounds of chattering and jabbering madmen came down the staircase. But these were not what the young detective was listening for.

He felt sure that Uno had retired.

The other keepers of course had long since gone to bed. He crept shadow-like up the staircase.

He was now on the second floor of the asylum. The passage before him led into the wing.

While Young King Brady was ascending these stairs he little realized that two compatriots were descending a pair at the other end of the passage.

But this was true.

Young King Brady glided along the corridor swiftly. From one cell to another he went flashing his dark lantern into each.

The chattering, gibbering maniacs leered and hissed at him.

Some were men and some were women.

But in none of the cells did he find any to answer the description of Victorine La Salle.

He reached the end of the corridor.

Then he went back.

He was now again in the main body of the house.

All around him were high oaken doors. What was beyond them he could only guess.

Then a sudden thought struck him with a chill.

Why, was it not more likely that Victorine would be confined in one of these large chambers than in a cell?

If she had not been inoculated with the deadly virus of insanity, and was simply held as a prisoner through

the instigation of Jefferson Dale, surely this would be the most likely place of confinement.

He listened at each of the doors.

Then he tried the knobs.

They were all locked securely.

Young King Brady was bound to know what was beyond these oaken doors.

He selected one of them.

He examined the lock.

He saw that it could be easily picked.

At once he went silently at work upon it. Once he thought he heard a movement beyond the door.

He waited and listened.

At length reassured, he went on.

Finally he got the skeleton key fitted, and then turned the bolt silently. The job was done.

It was easy for Young Brady to gently open the door.

All was blackness beyond it.

For a moment he listened intently.

He heard a comprehensive sound.

It was even respiration.

Another person was in the room.

Who was it?

Whoever it was, Young King Brady believed that person was asleep. The breathing was very regular.

Without hesitation, the young detective drew his dark lantern and pulled the slide.

A thrilling surprise was accorded him.

The rays of the lantern were thrown full into a leering, hideous face, which was not four feet from him, and glaring eyeballs, which burned in their intensity of gaze.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIVELY INCIDENTS.

YOUNG KING BRADY was so astounded by this dénouement, that he was for a moment powerless to move.

The face held in the focus of the dark lantern was the most frightful he had ever seen.

It was not that of a sleeping man.

It was of one wide awake and a maniac at that.

The next moment with a hiss that face was thrust nearer.

The lantern was swept from his hands, and Young King Brady felt himself in a tiger's grasp.

Never in his life had he encountered so powerful a foe.

He was a lithe and active young man himself, and capable of putting up a good battle.

But he felt that he was overmatched.

He was in the clutch of a giant.

Words are inadequate to express the sensations he experienced. The power of a madman is abnormal.

Young King Brady knew that the game was up.

Even if he bested his assailant, exposure was certain, for the uproar would arouse everybody in the house.

A terrific struggle followed.

Roaring like a lion, the maniac descended upon Young King Brady.

The young detective tried in vain to defend himself. He was strangled, crushed, and thrown to the floor in a heap.

Half senseless he lay there.

The maniac could have killed him.

But he did not.

He burst from his prison chamber into the hall, and started to run amuck through the house.

Of course the asylum was at once in an uproar.

The keepers came flying from their rooms, Red Uno with the rest, and Dr. Jacobs also.

Tremendous was the excitement which ensued. It was past the power of pen to describe.

The liberated madman rushed down through the house in a great frenzy.

The keepers went after him like wolves after their prey.

"Catch him!" yelled Jacobs. "Hit him! Knock him down! Kill him!"

Red Uno gave a roar like a bull, and dashed down the staircase.

He sprung upon the maniac, and a terrible struggle followed.

Blood was splashed on the marble tiles and flowed in rivulets along their surface. The other keepers came to Uno's aid.

The struggle was soon over.

The maniac yielded to a blow on the skull, which stretched him senseless. Then the exhausted keepers proceeded to make an investigation.

But all this while Young King Brady had not been idle.

He had recovered his senses, and at once proceeded to make sure of his safety. He comprehended the situation, and saw his chance.

He had been seen by none of the asylum people yet.

They did not know, and perhaps did not suspect that he had liberated the madman. The first natural assumption, of course, would be that it was the result of the maniac's cunning.

So the detective slipped into the shadows behind an angle in the wall. Here was a column with a bust on it.

He hid himself behind it.

"Well," roared Red Uno, as he wiped the blood from his bare arms, for he was in his night clothes, "can anyone tell how that devil got loose?"

None of the keepers could say.

"He was behind a strong door and a powerful lock," said Jacobs. "How could he force it?"

"There's nothing like the iron bars," said one of the keepers.

"You're right," agreed Uno, "but I'm going to investigate. Turn up the lights and we'll see about it all."

The lights were turned up as directed.

This flooded the upper hall where Young King Brady was hiding, with the glare of a strong light.

His position behind the pedestal and bust was a risky one, for they barely screened him.

But he had not time to change it.

The burly keepers, with Dr. Jacobs, were coming up the stairs.

They approached the open door of the room in which the maniac had been confined.

"Here's the door wide open," cried one of the keepers. "How did he get it open?"

"Look at the lock," said Jacobs.

Uno examined the lock.

"The bolt is shot back."

"It could only have been done with a key."

"Where could he have got it?"

It seemed a mystery to the keepers.

It might have remained so but for an unfortunate incident which at once precipitated matters.

The pedestal and bust behind which Young King Brady was hiding suddenly fell with a terrific crash.

It revealed the crouching form of the young detective.

It was a thrilling moment.

The game was up.

He was exposed completely.

He stood up boldly and faced the gang. He was cool and defiant.

For a moment Jacobs and the keepers stared at him.

It was as great a surprise to them as they had ever experienced.

"The devil!" ejaculated Jacobs, with a savage oath. "Who are you, and how did you get in here?"

The young detective smiled.

"I am a detective," he said.

"A detective?"

"Yes!"

The doctor and the keeper stared.

"How did you get in here?" asked Jacobs, with suppressed fury.

"I refuse to tell!"

"What are you after?"

"Victorine La Salle!"

"Fool!" ejaculated Jacobs, savagely. "She is not here. One of your ilk was here awhile ago looking for her. Was he not satisfied?"

"I cannot say."

"Who are you?"

"My name is Harry Brady!"

"Young King Brady!" exclaimed one of the keepers. "He's the mate of that old fellow who was here awhile ago. The two Bradys is what they are called."

Jacobs' face was rigid and white.

His passion was murderous.

"Is that true?" he asked.

"It is, sir!"

"Well, I am sorry for the two Bradys. There will be only one Brady after to-night."

There was an ominous hiss in his words.

"Perhaps you are not aware that the meshes of the law are closing about you," said Young King Brady, as a bluff.

"Humph!" said Jacobs, contemptuously. "They

can't touch me. I am protected by enough political influence to turn the city of New York."

"You are the worst criminal on earth," said Young King Brady. "The ordinary murderer is a saint compared with you. You not only murder in its truest sense, but you place innocent souls in an earthly hell by means of your chemical formula."

Jacobs was marble white.

"You overheard Wittman and me," he exclaimed, tensely. "You have my secret. You have spoken your doom. You cannot go from here alive."

The declaration was blood-curdling in its intensity. No words can do justice to it.

Young King Brady knew at that moment that he was in the most desperate position of his career.

It was too true that there was a strong chance that he would not go from the place alive.

Indeed, it was not easy to see how his life could be saved.

Four gigantic men, with the power of Hercules, hemmed him in. That Jacobs would authorize his murder there could be no doubt.

But the young detective had decided on a bold *coup de main*.

He believed he had enough evidence now to convict the whole gang and close this den of infamy.

He had no doubt that Victorine La Salle was in the place.

If so, she would be found, and it would be easy enough then to right her wrongs.

But the young detective was influenced in his course by yet a stronger reason.

He had chanced to glance over the heads of the keepers to the entrance of the wing corridor.

And there, in the full blaze of the light, he saw two men.

They were Old King Brady and Ulric Hayne.

They had, of course, heard the uproar, and had come down to investigate. It was a thrilling discovery they made.

Each held loaded revolvers in readiness for use.

Jacobs was like a maniac himself.

"Do you hear!" he yelled. "That man must not go out of here alive. If he does, we are all candidates for the gallows. Down him!"

A roar went up from the keepers.

Red Uno shook his mane.

But before they could spring upon the young detective, a clarion voice cried:

"Hold! The man who puts a finger on that young man, dies!"

It was Old King Brady.

As if electrified the keepers and Jacobs turned. They were aghast.

The keepers seemed to lose their courage. The thought of the law and its consequences was upon them.

White and trembling they looked ready to flee.

Only Jacobs' cool nerve held them.

He faced the situation.

"Fools!" he cried. "If you give up you are lost. It is as easy to die here as on the gallows."

Red Uno shook his mane again.

"You are to give the order," he roared. "You are our master. What shall we do?"

"Do!" shouted Jacobs. "Kill every man of them."

Then what followed was thrilling in the extreme. Jacobs, by a deft movement, pressed a button on the wall.

Instantly the lights went out.

The asylum was in darkness.

Crack-ack!

Old King Brady and Ulric fired. But they dared not fire again for fear of hitting Young King Brady.

There was a yelling and scurrying and the sounds of a struggle.

Young King Brady had acted with lightning rapidity. He had leaped upon one of the keepers.

A terrible struggle followed.

Ulric and Old King Brady had grabbed another. They were powerful men and not easily subdued.

While the struggle was going on other things were being enacted of a wild and thrilling sort. The whole asylum was in an uproar.

CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG KING BRADY MAKES AN ARREST.

Of course the uproar set all the madmen in the place to howling and leaping in their cells.

The din was hideous.

Young King Brady after a long, hard struggle secured and handcuffed his man. Old King Brady and Ulric did the same.

But they had barely succeeded when a sound reached their ears which was most disheartening.

The big gate was being opened.

Using their dark lanterns they left their prisoners handcuffed and helpless, and rushed down into the yard.

But a carriage had left the place at full speed. There had been just time to hitch up the horses and flee.

The other two keepers and Jacobs had made their escape.

Pursuit was out of the question.

"That is too bad!" cried Young King Brady. "I had no idea they would do that."

"It is Jacobs' work."

"Yes."

"He will be hard to trap now."

"Indeed he will."

"But this nest of infamy is broken up."

"It is."

"But Victorine," cried Ulric. "Let us find her!"

"If she is in the asylum still," said Old King Brady. Ulric gave a sharp cry.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"She may not be here. Perhaps these fiends have——"

"Taken her away?"

"Yes."

A cry of agony burst from Ulric's lips.

"Oh, do not say that!" he cried. "Let us find out, and if she is gone we must go at once in pursuit."

With Old King Brady he went back into the asylum.

Young King Brady went to the nearest police signal box and pulled in a call.

Then he returned.

Old King Brady had found means to turn on the lights, and the asylum was once more alight.

From one cell to another, from cellar to garret, Ulric and the detective went in quest of Victorine.

But she was gone.

In a cell, the door of which was open, was found certain information.

It was a slip of card, and on it was faintly penciled:

"They are going to take me away. I do not know where. I am sane and I pray you give me rescue.

"VICTORINE LA SALLE."

Ulric was frantic.

He wanted to leave the asylum and go on a blind chase at once.

But Old King Brady restrained him.

"It would be of no use," he said. "Hold your patience. We will save her yet."

"But driven to the wall they may for revenge inoculate her with the insanity virus."

"Do not fear that," cried Old King Brady. "Jefferson Dale no doubt has a deeper game."

"I can understand," said Ulric, rigidly. "He hopes to compel her to marry him. He would then come into possession of the Hess fortune legitimately."

"That is it," said the detective.

"But if he sees failure——"

"He will not see it until too late," assured Old King Brady.

"You think so?"

"I feel sure of it!"

"Heaven bless you, for those words of cheer," said the young lover. "But have you any idea where they have taken her?"

"Only a vague idea!"

"Jacobs has two other asylums."

The old detective smiled.

"He will hardly be found at either of these," he declared. "The asylum business is done for Dr. Jacobs!"

This was true beyond doubt.

The villainous asylum keeper was exposed fully, and it was only a question of his capture to convict him of murder.

The gallows waited for him.

By this time officers had arrived.

They took charge of the house.

Old King Brady sent word quickly to headquarters. By his direction officers were at once dispatched to the other asylums in Westchester and New Jersey.

In a few hours these would be in charge of the police.

The whole asylum fraud was exposed.

The next day the newspapers of the country had the whole affair in type.

A tremendous sensation was created.

The Dr. Jacobs asylum frauds formed the topic of a fearful discussion.

All manner of black disclosures were in order.

It was found that women who had tired of their husbands, scheming heirs who were in a hurry to inherit, false lovers, treacherous relatives, many of them people prominent in society and finance, had done business with Dr. Jacobs.

The victims had in all cases in some secret manner, while asleep or under a drug been inoculated with the Wittman serum.

Of course, insanity followed.

With feigned sorrow and interest, their "friends" had insisted upon sending them to a "private" asylum.

On the plea that they would receive special nursing and care.

With greater hopes for recovery.

The readers may draw their own conclusions. The result we shall see.

Of course, the Bradys came in for no end of praise and credit.

But with their characteristic modesty, they kept well in the background.

Only half their work was done.

The asylum frauds were exposed.

Dr. Jacobs and his gang were driven to the wall.

They were fugitives.

But the end was not yet.

Case Number Ten was not fully solved by any means.

The rogues were at large.

The fate of Victorine La Salle yet hung in the balance. The Bradys were careful to make no reference to this case.

They did not care to give publicity to the fact that Victorine had been one of the asylum occupants.

Such a revelation would have interfered seriously with the plans of the detectives.

There were others who merited the attention of the Bradys who might be put on their guard.

Notably Jefferson Dale.

So that matter was kept dark.

The detectives got upon the trail as speedily as possible.

Ulric accompanied them.

But Jacobs and his crew had very cleverly covered their tracks. No clew could be found.

The Bradys employed every method known to detective science.

But in vain.

Weeks passed without result.

Then Young King Brady struck a clew. One day in a Broadway car he saw a man turn into a cross street.

The man looked familiar.

He wore a long beard.

In an instant the young detective left the car. He

followed the man assiduously, until he became satisfied that it was the same man whom he had seen at the asylum that night with Jacobs.

In fact it was one of the most important of the birds.

Namely, Wittman the chemist.

The chemist shop in Pearl street formerly kept by Wittman had been raided, but only an old furnace and a heap of bottles were found.

Young King Brady was astonished.

He knew that this man Wittman was one of the most wanted men in the country.

The gallows was sure to be his fate if captured alive.

And yet here he was openly showing himself on the public streets of the big city of New York.

He was easily identified on account of the smooth-flowing beard.

Certainly, Wittman was possessed of hardihood to thus expose himself. The young detective quickened his pace.

They had walked along Canal street as far as Third avenue.

Satisfied of his man, Young King Brady stepped forward and placed a hand on his shoulder.

The man turned.

"Wittman," said Young King Brady, easily, "you are a bold fellow."

The fellow affected blank surprise.

He tried to throw off Young King Brady's hand.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. I don't know you. Take your hand off my arm."

"Easy!" said Young King Brady. "That won't work, Mr. Wittman. Put on these, if you please."

He placed handcuffs on the other's wrists. He affected indignation.

"Are you a detective?" he asked coolly.

"I am!"

"What is your name?"

"Harry Brady."

"You are called Young King Brady?"

"I am."

"I have heard of you. But you make a mistake. I am not a criminal."

"All right, Mr. Wittman."

"My name is not Wittman."

"That won't work."

"What is your charge?"

"Murder."

"Humph," said the fellow, coolly. "I can speedily undeceive you. I am not the man you want. I am James Bliven of Newark, and I keep a store over there. I can prove it."

Young King Brady looked sharply at the fellow again.

But he was sure of the identification.

"You are my man," he said, positively. "You can bluff well, Wittman, but it don't fool me."

"I protest."

"Come along."

And Young King Brady took his prisoner to the Tombs. He was quickly locked up.

Of course the news spread that the chemist, Wittman, had been found.

The biggest kind of a sensation was in order. At the hearing the next day both the Bradys were on hand to identify the prisoner.

So were others.

From Newark came the man's wife, his son, and members of his church to identify him as James Bliven, a storekeeper of many years in Newark.

The detectives were staggered.

There was no other way but to discharge the prisoner as a case of mistaken identity.

And this was done.

Triumphantly he walked out of the court a free man. The detectives were literally dumfounded.

"Humph!" was all Old King Brady could say.

Young King Brady, however, was not satisfied. He said confidently:

"There is some queer game about this. I can take my oath that man is the man who visited Jacobs that night at the asylum, and is therefore the compounder of the insanity poison."

CHAPTER X.

IN THE CHEMIST SHOP.

YOUNG KING BRADY was sincere in his assertion.

He believed firmly that the chemist Wittman was identical with James Blevin, the Newark merchant.

Yet how could this be?

Was he capable of conducting two different roles? Was he a man who led a double life?

This was a question.

Young King Brady was determined to find a solution to it. He decided to go ahead on this line.

Old King Brady shared the views of his young protege.

For once the two detectives agreed.

But the old detective said :

"Go ahead then, on your lead for Wittman, and Ulric and I will try and locate Jacobs."

"That is a bargain," agreed Young King Brady. And so it was decided.

The two detectives separated.

Young King Brady went to Newark to look up the case of Blevin. He proceeded to shadow him persistently.

Old King Brady prepared to go on the trail of Jacobs and his keepers.

This was a most difficult undertaking.

He had not the slightest clew.

Since the asylum gang, with Victorine La Salle in their hands had driven away that night, not a thing had been heard from them.

But Old King Brady's methods were peculiar and shrewd.

He knew how futile it would be to endeavor to scour the country in quest of the doctor and the keepers.

It would be like looking for a needle in a stack of hay.

A mere waste of time.

He did not lend himself to the idea.

He had another plan.

There was present in New York, as he very well knew, a very important factor in the case.

This was no other than Jefferson Dale.

Dale was busy trying to force legal action in regard to his gaining the trusteeship, which meant absolute possession of the Hess fortune.

His plea was that Victorine La Salle was dead.

He was meeting with some success.

As he was the next direct and the only heir known to be alive, his chances certainly seemed good.

He had employed excellent legal talent.

Old King Brady smiled.

He lost no time in constituting himself the shadow of this enterprising and ambitious young man.

As a result he was not long in stumbling upon some interesting experiences.

The detective's theory was that, as Dale was in collusion with Jacobs there must be intercourse between them.

By shadowing Dale he hoped to get track of Jacobs.

Ulric Hayne was doing splendid work for an inexperienced man, by Old King Brady's directions.

One day he made a most valuable discovery. He saw Dale leave his office on Broadway.

He followed him.

At the corner of Wall street Dale met a messenger boy who appeared to know him and gave him a letter.

This letter Dale read, and essaying to put it in his pocket changed his mind and tore it in pieces.

It was in the midst of a hurrying crowd, and an ordinary person would have thought it impossible to have ever recovered the bits of paper.

But Ulric was a youth of patience.

He watched his chance, and by dint of patient effort managed to recover the most of the fragments.

His labor might have been for naught.

He was not at all sure that the letter was of any value. But he was in search of any sort of a clew.

Recovering the fragments of the letter he proceeded to put them together.

What he read startled him.

The chirography was cramped and irregular. It read :

"DEAR DALE:—In regard to the matter you speak of, will say that the retorts are yet in working order, and I can manufacture as much of the virus as you need.

"If you will come to my laboratory to-night at eleven, alone, I will be glad to supply you. Use extreme caution, for I have hard work to keep those wolves of detectives at bay. Yours, etc.,

"WITTMAN."

For a moment Ulric was unable to completely realize the value of the discovery he had made.

It was of the greatest value.

His brain reeled.

He did not for a moment think of shadowing Dale alone.

He went at once to Old King Brady and put the letter in his hands. The old detective was delighted.

"Ah," he said, with a shrug, "this Dale is going into the insanity business, is he? What party does he want to put out of the way? This will bear investigation."

Plans were quickly made.

Old King Brady was to shadow Dale, while Ulric remained in the background.

The old detective felt sure that he would net the game this time.

So Wittman yet had a laboratory in New York?

This was news to Old King Brady.

It proved much.

It established the fact that Wittman was yet in New York and had not fled with Jacobs.

The chemist's assurance and hardihood was beyond question.

It was colossal.

Old King Brady lost no time in taking the trail. He haunted Dale's footsteps like a ghost.

He followed him to his hotel and waited until he came down again, long after ten o'clock.

Dale was dressed for a walk. He left the hotel and took a downtown car. The detective was on the same car.

Dale went on downtown as far as Fulton street. Then he got off.

He walked down this thoroughfare.

At that hour the shops were closed and there were few people on that street.

But Dale kept on until he reached the corner of Pearl street.

He turned this.

The detective was still behind him.

Along Pearl street Dale walked rapidly. Suddenly he disappeared.

Old King Brady was on the spot a moment later.

But no trace of the villain could he see. He was puzzled.

There seemed to be no open doorway or building into which he could have gone. They were warehouses and closed.

"Humph!" whispered the old detective. "That's queer."

Then he examined the sidewalk and the face of the building. Where this building adjoined a frame structure of great antiquity he saw a flash of light.

It came through a crevice.

The detective applied his eye, but could see nothing. He plainly heard the murmur of voices in the distance.

"That's queer!" he muttered again.

He was by no means satisfied.

He crept along the face of the frame building. The locality was very dark. No other person seemed in the vicinity.

Old King Brady made a discovery.

Where the frame building and the next building adjoined, the partition was a single wide board.

It was painted to represent brick and would deceive a casual observer.

But this board when withdrawn revealed a very narrow passage between the buildings.

It would hardly admit the body of a man, but the detective crept into it.

By much pressing and squeezing he passed through and came into a little pocket or blind court, where the walls of four buildings came together and made an inclosure eight or ten feet square.

No windows broke the walls on any side of this deep well.

But Old King Brady saw an opening in the underpinning of one of the buildings. A dim light shone through it.

The detective peered into this.

It revealed some stone steps and a narrow stone-walled passage.

This was enough.

Old King Brady was not slow to enter the place. He surmised from the odor of drugs that it was the secret laboratory of Chemist Wittman.

Down into the passage he slid.

He stood on the stone flagging.

Just ahead, light streamed from beneath a door. He heard the clink of glass.

Then a strange thing happened.

Old King Brady heard a triumphant chuckle behind him.

Then he received a stinging blow on the head. He fell in a half faint.

All was then a confused memory.

He knew that he was powerless to help himself, and was dragged by two men into a lighted room.

He was dragged down a little stairway.

As he came to, he was pulled upon his feet and tied securely to a post at the corner of the stairs.

Then quickly his brain cleared and he saw where he was, and took in the scene about him.

He saw the square walls of an underground chamber. There were all the appurtenances of a chemist's laboratory in the place.

The furnace, retorts and other accessories were all in place. There were two men there.

They were gazing at him. He recognized them easily.

One was Wittman.

The other was Dale.

There was a mocking smile on Dale's face. He twisted his mustache, and cried:

"Well, old sleuth, have you come to your senses? It must be a surprise to you, eh?"

Old King Brady recovered himself.

He regarded the villain coolly.

"You were behind me," he said.

"Why, certainly! You kept the appointment too early."

"Perhaps so!"

"You will find it so to your cost. Shall I tell you

something interesting? You will not go out of here alive."

Old King Brady's lip curled.

"Do you expect to frighten me?" he asked.

"Fools know no fear," returned Dale. "You were a fool to come here, thinking to gain anything. What are you after?"

"You and that fellow over there."

"How is that, Wittman?"

The chemist made a grimace.

"It looks as if we had him," he declared. "I don't think it will take long to convince him that he has barked up the wrong tree."

"Just so!" cried Dale, triumphantly. "We have just the right kind of a dose for him, eh, Wittman?"

CHAPTER XI.

GETTING A CLEW.

THE chemist grinned horribly.

"I think so," he replied.

He went to the furnace and poured out of a crucible some curious sticky substance. He took a glass mixer and stirred it up in a meditative way.

"This is the best I ever made," he said. "I believe it will make a man a violent maniac in twenty minutes after inoculation."

"Good!" cried Dale. "How shall we inoculate him?"

"Hypodermic syringe is all right."

"Let me have it."

"Here it is."

With a thrill of horror Old King Brady realized what the villains intended to do.

This was to inoculate him with the deadly virus of the insane poison.

It was a horrible reflection.

It nearly unnerved the old detective.

Death he could face.

But this was living death. It was worse, it was a transition to hell before death.

"My God!" he exclaimed, the cold sweat breaking out upon him. "You are not going to do that!"

Dale laughed boisterously.

"Oh, he squeals, our brave detective," he cried, scornfully. "He has lost his courage. Oho! how fine!"

"If you are men, you will take my life. I am not afraid to die!"

"Old King Brady," said Dale in his icy manner, "nothing could induce me to forego the pleasure of giving you this poison. I shall delight in your mad ravings, your insane follies. It will be the treat of my life!"

"Demon!"

Dale laughed hideously.

"Go on," he cried. "You may call names. I am going to have my turn pretty quick. Hurry up, Wittman!"

The words had barely left his lips when a strange thing happened.

Old King Brady had given up hope.

But rescue was at hand.

He was not to die in such a manner.

There was a door to the underground laboratory, which led into an adjoining cellar.

Behind this door there crouched a dark figure. The watcher had been listening and watching.

Suddenly he drew back and threw his weight against the door. It went crashing in.

Slowly the chemist Wittman poured out the deadly poison.

But the crashing in of the door revealed Young King Brady, and the old detective's life was saved.

In the young detective's hands were pistols.

"Hold, you dogs!" he shouted. "Hands up or you die!"

There was nothing to do but obey. It was plain that Dale and Wittman were astounded at the turn of affairs.

When Wittman went to the laboratory that night he little dreamed that Young King Brady was close upon his heels.

He little knew that the young detective had gained a hiding place in the next cellar, and from there had seen the whole affair.

And Young King Brady had arrived none too soon.

He was really in the nick of time.

Old King Brady was saved from an awful fate, a fate far worse than death.

Of course, Wittman and Dale threw up their arms.

Young King Brady was master of the situation. Dale was white as a sheet and trembled like a leaf.

"Curse the luck!" he gritted. "These detectives are omnipresent."

"You will think so before you are done with us," said Young King Brady. "Kindly put on these handcuffs. Mr. Dale, and you, Mr. Wittman Bliven."

The chemist was white as chalk.

He could only obey the mandate of his captor. The handcuffs were placed on the wrists of the prisoners.

"Your society friends will no doubt be surprised, Mr. Bliven," said Young King Brady, affably. "But they will, of course, realize that the law must take its course."

"Curse you!" gritted Wittman.

"You'd like to give me a dose of your poison, wouldn't you?" and Young King Brady turned about.

He cut Old King Brady's bonds.

"You are unhurt?" he asked.

"I am all right," replied the old detective. "But Harry, you are a hero. You saved my life. You came just in the nick of time."

The young detective shuddered.

"What if I had been too late?" he said.

Old King Brady was not altogether recovered from the blow he had received. He was somewhat faint and dizzy.

So he sank into a chair.

The chemist's shop was a queer sort of a den.

Here Wittman, the chemist-murderer, for such he really was, had prepared all his deadly poisons.

He was a deep student and no doubt a man of brains. Great fame would have been his had he only exerted his wits in a right direction.

Thus many really brilliant men become deadly criminals.

Some abnormal quality, some evil development over-crops the good, and ruin follows.

Wittman, with the assistance of Jacobs, had cut a wide swath.

His victims could be numbered in the hundreds.

Many of them were yet alive, but those dead were far better off.

It was murder, if not direct, at least in effect just as complete. He was the culprit.

Jacobs was an accomplice.

One more great step in the case had been gained. Now all that was left was to secure Jacobs and the keepers.

And rescue Victorine.

This was the hardest problem of all that the detectives had been called upon to face.

There was nothing easy about it. Jacobs would not be so easy a man to catch as Wittman.

The chemist had hardihood and nerve, but not shrewdness. He was easily run down.

But Jacobs, devoid of nerve or courage, was fox-like and deep, crafty as a rat, and sly as a weasel.

He would not be easily caught.

But now that Dale was in limbo there was no reason why the villain should hang on to Victorine.

The Bradys rather inclined to the belief that he would drop the young girl as a possibly fatal incumbrance.

This would be another point.

It aroused the hopes of Ulric.

Especially was the young lover encouraged by the perusal of letters found on Dale's person.

These were from Jacobs, and were postmarked at a point in northern New York known as Fairville.

It was a point near the Canada line. The asylum proprietor and the two keepers, with Victorine in their charge, were in hiding in a camp in the woods.

They relied upon Dale for information to enable them to quickly cross the line into Canada and safety.

The detectives believed now that they had the case well in hand.

It seemed only necessary to at once speed away to Fairville and surround the camp in the woods.

Dale and Wittman were quickly placed in the Tombs.

Another sensation was thus created in this most thrilling of cases. The public was eager for more news.

It did not take the two Bradys long to prepare for the trip to Fairville.

Ulric Hayne insisted upon going also. The detectives did not demur.

He was tractable, and never interfered with their plans. Old King Brady liked him well.

Thus, the trio set forth.

They went at once by quickest way to Gouverneur. The town of Fairville was between this place and the St. Lawrence river, and not far from Prescott, Ontario.

It was only a backwoods settlement, and more the resort of hunters than aught else.

The detectives went to Ogdensburg, and then cut off to the southeast into the wild woods. In due time they reached Fairville.

They were in clever disguise.

It did not take them long to locate the camp occupied by the villains. Some lumbermen gave them many points.

Victorine had been seen and was described. She was reported as having the appearance of one in half a stupor.

"Drugged!" said Old King Brady with conviction. "That is what that means."

"The scoundrels!" gritted Ulric. "I wish I could meet that villain Jacobs. I would teach him a lesson."

"Your wish may soon be granted," said Old King Brady. "Unless he gets the alarm before we get there."

There was of course no way of reaching Fairville by rail.

It was far in the woods and only a trail led in to the wilds.

Truly the wily doctor had sought a place of safety in real earnest.

But the detectives and Ulric took the trail without hesitation. Fortunately the weather was mild and pleasant.

They made a shake-down of pine boughs at night and slept comfortably in the depth of the woods.

For no habitations were near.

Thus for two days they traveled.

On the morning of the third day, they came to the banks of a rushing stream. Old King Brady held up a hand.

"Listen!" he said.

The sounds of an ax came plainly to the hearing of all. It was on the other side of the stream that the wielder of it was at work.

"We will cross and interview him," said Old King Brady.

"We cannot be far from the camp," said Young King Brady.

"That is true."

"I never felt so nervous and impatient in my life," declared Ulric. "I could fly the rest of the way."

The detectives laughed.

They knew that the ardor of love is most intense when baffled by fate. Yet they sympathized with Ulric.

A good place was found for wading the stream, which in most parts was quite shallow.

On the opposite bank they again put on their clothes, and started out in the direction of the sounds of the ax.

After proceeding some distance, Old King Brady burst into a clearing.

Here all saw a woodman at work chopping on a tree. He stopped and stared at the three travelers.

He was a big, hulking fellow in a red shirt and heavy boots.

"Hello, strangers!" he called out as they approached. "Where in tarnation did you come from?"

"We came from Ogdensburg," replied Old King Brady, "and we are looking for Fairville lumber camp."

CHAPTER XII.

HOT ON THE SCENT.

"WALL, I swan!" exclaimed the woodman. "Yew are quite a ways from home ain't ye, now?"

"Yes," admitted the old detective. "But perhaps you can tell us where the camp is."

"P'raps I kin."

"Well, please do so."

The wood-chopper looked critically at his interlocutor while he bit off a big hunk of tobacco.

"It ain't far from here," he replied. "Jest take them blazed trees. But I say, my friend."

"Well?"

"What do ye want down ter camp?"

"Just thought we'd drop down and see the place," said Old King Brady.

"Humph!" exclaimed the wood-chopper, sententiously. "'Tain't a good day to go down thar, I kin tell ye."

"Eh?" exclaimed the old detective, feigning idle interest. "Why not?"

"Nigh every man in ther place is on a rampage. A stranger come up from the lower towns t'other day and brought a lot of firewater with him. He has got 'em all agoin', I kin tell ye. It's a hot place just now."

"Is that so?"

"Jest thought I'd tell ye. It ain't anything to me, of course, an' ye've got a right to do what ye please."

"We don't want to get into a rumpus with anybody," said Young King Brady.

"I reckoned not by the looks of ye," said the woodman. "Thar's lots of you fellers come up here huntin' an' fishin'. Some on ye don't go home."

"What do you mean?" asked Old King Brady, quietly.

"Jest what I said. Some on ye don't go home. Thar's bad men in ther woods jest the same as anywhere else."

The detectives exchanged glances.

There was an avert warning in the fellow's words which they did not lose sight of.

"So that's the way of it," said Old King Brady. "Then you don't think it's safe for us to go down to Fairville?"

"Not just at present."

"Do you think they would dare attack an officer of the law?"

The fellow stared.

"Law!" he exclaimed. "Thar ain't no law in ther woods, man. Leastwise none I ever heerd on. Must be you're green."

"There is law in Uncle Sam's country, and this is part of it," declared Old King Brady. "But I want to ask you a question."

The wood-chopper looked shrewd.

"Wall," he said, "thar ain't no law agin that in ther woods."

"Which is a very good thing," said Old King Brady, "for it would have to be repealed. But tell me, are there any women in Fairville camp?"

"Plenty on 'em, such as they are."

"Lumbermen's wives?"

"Yas, an' some thet ain't wives."

"Just so. Now, can you tell me if three men have arrived there lately with a very handsome young lady in their care. A young woman different from the run of women in the woods."

The wood-chopper straightened up.

"Oh, yas," he replied. "That must be the party that brought ther barrel of rum into camp. One of ther men is a doctor."

"That is it!" cried Young King Brady. "He is the fellow!"

"Wall, yas," replied the woodcutter, "I remember the gal now. She is very pooty."

"Yes, very beautiful!" cried Ulric. "But tell me, my good man, is she safe and well?"

The woodman stared at the youth.

"Be you in love with her?" he asked.

The two Bradys roared.

Ulric turned crimson.

The fellow had more penetration than he had given him credit for, but Ulric was not the one to be easily disconcerted.

He at once replied:

"You are a good guesser. Well, yes, I am in love with her."

The woodman spat on his hands.

Then he swung the heavy broad ax up, and struck it into the trunk of the tree leaving it there.

"I thought so," he said, unctiously. "Wall, I kin tell ye that ye want to git her away from thar jest as quick as ye kin. Is that doctor her father?"

"By no means!" cried Ulric. "He is her abductor, a villain and a murderer!"

"Sho; yew don't say."

"But I do, and that is what we are up here in this country for."

"Look here, my man," said Old King Brady. "What is your name?"

"Thomas Henry, sir."

"Well, Henry, we are officers of the law—detectives, you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now we want that doctor and the two men with him, and the young girl. We want you to help us. Guide us to the camp and give us help to trap them and you shall be well paid."

The woodman pulled off his gloves and threw them down.

"I'm your buckleberry," he said. "But I warn ye it ain't goin' to be an easy thing to do. They don't like strangers down there to ther camp unless they bring stuff with 'em ther way that doctor did."

"Who is the boss of the camp?"

"Sid Carter, but he ain't hyar now. Ther men live just about as they please. They cut ther logs an' float 'em down on ther freshets and Sid comes up once in awhile an' pays us all off."

"Oh, I see."

It was easy to understand how things were run in this Fairville camp.

It was like many others of the same kind. The law of physical supremacy was the only recognized law.

All grievances between man and man were settled in their own fashion, with knives or fists or otherwise.

The detectives could see that hot work was ahead for them.

But they had not come into the region unprepared for this contingency.

Old King Brady had foreseen it.

He had procured disguises of a suitable kind. These were now produced.

Thomas Henry was astonished.

When the detectives and Ulric made themselves up for the same type of man he was himself, he smiled.

The clothes were all right.

But he said:

"Them hands of yourn kain't fool no woodsman. Yew want to keep them out of sight."

He compared his own hand with that of Young King Brady.

The gigantic paw of the backwoodsman seamed and scarred and fissured was in great contrast to that of the young detective.

Thomas Henry was right.

The hands of the disguised men were their menace. But Old King Brady said:

"We must keep them out of sight as much as possible. Gloves like those of yours will hide them."

The sheepskin gloves of Thomas Henry were turned over to Old King Brady. He was now quite perfectly disguised.

"I think we're all right now," he declared, "if Thomas Henry will lead the way."

And so the party set out.

Thomas Henry was a good guide.

He was now thoroughly enlisted in behalf of the detectives. He gave them much valuable information.

It was sufficient to convince the detectives that they could not openly enter the camp and arrest the doctor and his pals.

That they would have the camp about their ears for this was certain.

Therefore, their only hope was to decoy the birds out of their cover.

Old King Brady now regretted that he had not brought a posse of men into the woods with him.

It was too late to go back.

They must trust to strategy and skillful detective work, but the Bradys were not a bit disheartened.

The day was drawing rapidly to a close. Darkness was at hand.

Suddenly the lights of the camp burst into view.

It was an array of board shanties, several dozen in number surrounding several sawmills. The streets were beds of sawdust, and on all sides the place was shut in by great fir trees.

Not in all the lumber country was there a settlement which bore so hard a name as Fairville.

The day's work was done.

The sawmills were quiet.

The lumbermen were preparing their evening meals, and lights gleamed from the log cabins and shanties.

It was a fantastic scene to our men just from the din of a great city.

They gazed upon it in wonder.

But Thomas Henry led the way to his own cabin, and throwing open the door, said :

"In ther woods ther stranger is allus welcome. Jest walk in an' make yerselves at home."

In a few moments Henry had built a fire of logs on the hearth and disposed rude stools about the sawdust-covered floor.

"Make yourselves at home," he said, roughly. "I've got some bacon and some coffee and potatoes. That's what we woodcutters live on."

"It is good enough," declared Old King Brady. "We are not fault finding."

The travelers were tired and glad enough to rest about the fire.

The woodman made an appetizing meal with the bacon and potatoes, and of this they partook.

Then in an undertone plans for the night were discussed.

For it was determined to go to work at once. Thomas Henry assured them that the lumbermen would turn night into day until the barrel of rum was gone.

After the lumbermen had finished their evening meal the excitement began.

Liquor began to flow and all sorts of licentious actions followed.

A great pile of wood in the center of the camp was set on fire.

It made a tremendous blaze.

However, it made the vicinity as light as day. Round about the fire the lumbermen gathered.

Songs and rude jests were the order, and the scenes peculiar to such a community were enacted.

Thomas Henry pointed out the two cabins occupied by Jacobs and his companions and Victorine.

Victorine had one small cabin to herself. The door was barred, as well as the windows, so that she could not escape.

For Jacobs had blinded the lumbermen with the story of her insanity.

It was easy for him to deceive them in his role of

doctor. Moreover, the barrel of rum had its influence.

It looked as if Jacobs had suddenly taken possession of this lumbering community.

As our friends now approached the bonfire, they saw him emerge from one of the log cabins.

He carried a demijohn in his hand, and walking into the midst of the group of rough men cried :

"Come and get a drink, boys!"

CHAPTER XIII.

AFFAIRS AT THE LUMBER CAMP.

THE effect of this upon such a lawless crew can well be imagined.

Of course none refused.

The demijohn was passed around.

Then cheers were proposed for Dr. Jacobs. The orgies of the night had begun.

The two Bradys had all they could do to restrain Ulric from rushing to the cabin in which it was said Victorine was confined.

The youth finally yielded to reason ; but he was intensely excited.

The thought that the girl he loved was so near him, and yet he could not go to her rescue, galled him.

"Have patience," said Old King Brady ; "your time will come."

The lumbermen were now well under the influence of the liquor.

All sorts of pranks were enacted.

The Bradys and Ulric, in their disguise, were hardly noticed. They were safe for the time.

Thomas Henry, their guide, it was plain, was of a very different type from others in the camp.

He did not indulge in any of the orgies nor drink a drop of the liquor. There were a few others like him.

Old King Brady felt that he could be trusted. So he said :

"Thomas Henry, what do you think of our plan to liberate the girl? Could we get her to a safe point before daylight?"

The lumberman was thoughtful.

His face lit up.

"Thar is a way," he said.

"Ah, what is it?"

"The river."

"Well?"

"I have a skiff just below here. I could row down and shoot the rapids to Kenesaw ten miles away. Down there I have friends and these are officers of the law."

"Done!" cried Old King Brady. "Ulric, come here!"

The young lover sprang forward.

His face was eager.

He saw that Old King Brady had a plan to propose, and that beyond a doubt it concerned him.

So he cried :

"I am here, sir. What is it?"

"We have a plan!"

"You have?"

"Yes!"

"What is it?"

"It will necessitate your dropping out of this case at once."

The youth's face fell.

He drew a long sigh.

"Ah!" he said. "That is a hard condition."

"It is an easy one for you!"

"I do not understand you!"

The old detective laughed.

"You will later," he said. "Do you see that cabin over yonder? The small one, I mean."

"I do!"

"In that cabin Miss La Salle is held a prisoner."

"Yes."

"We propose to go there at once and by stratagem get her out of the place. There will be risk."

"Hang the risk!"

Ulric trembled with eagerness. His eyes shone like stars.

"Just give me the chance!" he whispered. "I will take all the risk. But what then? Can we hope to stand off this whole camp?"

"Thomas has a plan!"

"Ah, what is it?"

Old King Brady then elaborated the plan proposed to Henry. Ulric listened with eager delight.

"You must go down the river in this skiff with Miss La Salle and Thomas," said Old King Brady.

"Well?"

"At Kenesaw you will be safe. Then make your way to the nearest railway station, and I'll trust you for the rest."

Ulric was so insane with delight that he turned a handspring on the spot.

"You're right you can trust me," he cried. "Oh, it is too good to believe. Just think of it. Victorine saved!"

He could hardly contain himself.

But Old King Brady sternly restrained him.

"Remember what depends," he said. "You must be cool and calm."

"I will!"

Preparations were at once made for the carrying out of this daring plan.

The cabin was not guarded.

Jacobs and the two keepers had made themselves solid with the lumbermen, so that they did not fear any attempt to set Victorine free.

An insane person is avoided by everybody, and such Victorine was believed to be.

Of course he did not suspect that rescuers were already in the camp.

The two keepers with him were former Bowery toughs, and went by the names of Kurd and Clark.

They were in a state of semi-intoxication all the while.

The wily doctor did not seek to discourage their drinking for politic reasons. He could handle them better under the influence of liquor.

So far as his interest in Victorine was concerned, it was not great.

It was wholly on account of Dale that he had brought her along at all.

Really the doctor would have been glad to have left her in the asylum. He had grumbled much.

"You always get in trouble when you fool with women," he declared. "Now, Dale would have been all right to have given her a dose of virus and a padded cell. He never can force her to marry him. She is a pretty obstinate piece, and he is a fool to think he can do it."

"He has got her money and got rid of her. He should let it go at that."

This was Jacobs' reasoning.

But Dale was infatuated and insisted upon the course pursued. Jacobs had a promise of a large share of the Hess million, so he did not care.

But since being driven from the asylum, he felt himself handicapped with the care of the captive girl.

He would have given much to be rid of her.

In the lumber camp, however, he believed that he was buried from the world and safe.

He did not once think that detectives could follow him there.

He received letters from Dale by way of Ogdensburg. One of the lumbermen went out every other day and brought in the mails.

But Jacobs had not yet heard of the exposure and arrest of Wittman and Dale in New York.

If he had been aware of it, it is safe to say that he would hardly have stayed to participate in the fête around the big bonfire in Fairville camp.

He would have crossed the border before daybreak.

And it was hardly likely that he would have taken Victorine with him. In case of a forced abandonment, it was understood between him and Dale that the young girl should have a dose of the insanity virus.

This would clear Dale's title to the Hess property beyond dispute, although he would lose the girl he had so strong a passion for.

So Jacobs never dreamed of the perils impending over his head that night.

It would have been folly for the Bradys to have openly tried to rescue Victorine La Salle.

Jacobs would have had the whole camp at his back.

The Bradys were not long in perfecting their plans.

And it did not seem a hard task in view of the existing circumstances. Nobody was on guard at the cabin.

The detectives watched their chance.

Thomas Henry and Ulric were put on guard. Then silently the Bradys crept up in the shadows in the rear of the cabin.

A light shone within.

Peering through a crevice, Old King Brady saw that it came from a log fire on the hearth.

He looked about for Victorine.

In the pale glow of the fire he saw her. She was

reclining upon a blanketed, rude cot at one end of the room.

Her face was beautiful, but stupid and dull in its lines.

It was evident that she was still under the influence of a drug. The detective watched her.

He was anxious first to acquaint her with the fact that rescuers were near.

How to do this was a problem.

But finally a happy thought came to him.

He proceeded to carry it out.

He drew a leaf from his notebook.

On it he wrote a message.

Then he tapped gently on the log wall of the cabin. The sound attracted the attention of the young girl.

She raised her head.

She was listening.

The detective tapped again.

Victorine now arose, and as if drawn by inspiration, came toward the spot where the detective was.

Her gaze was fixed on the log wall.

Old King Brady now thrust the leaf of the notebook through the crevice. It dropped on the sawdust floor.

Victorine, with a little cry, stooped and picked it up. She was a beautiful picture as she stood there reading it.

Thus she read:

"DEAR MISS LA SALLE:—Do not be disturbed. Friends are near to effect your rescue. We shall try to gain an entrance to the rear of the cabin. Be on your guard."

It would be, of course, quite impossible to depict the sensations experienced by Victorine at that moment.

Her face showed much.

The stupid, depressed expression vanished. The effects of the drug were at once overcome.

She glanced about her eagerly.

She looked at the door and the windows. Then she crept back to her cot and waited, listening.

Old King Brady saw what he believed to be a sure method of gaining an entrance to the rear of the cabin.

There were no windows in the rear of the structure. It had a high roof which came almost down to the ground.

The roof was of fir boughs.

They were held in place by long poles and withes. This kind of a roof keeps out cold, but is not impervious to water.

The old detective examined the thatch. He found a spot where the withes were wound about the framework.

Then with his knife he cut them.

A small section of the fir boughs lifted itself up. He pressed his hand under them and enlarged the aperture.

Then he worked upon the boughs with his knife.

He cleared them away rapidly, and soon had an opening large enough for him to crawl through.

This he did and dropped down upon the sawdust floor of the cabin.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESCUE.

VICTORINE sprang up.

Her hands were clasped, her lips were parted. She was a picture of eager excitement and hope.

"Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "Tell me who you are, and that you have come to take me from this place!"

"I am Old King Brady, detective, miss," replied the detective. "Do not fear. I am a friend and will soon have you out of this."

"Heaven be praised!"

"You must follow my directions."

"I will, but—"

"What?"

"Who sent you here?"

"No one in particular. The law in general. A hundred detectives have been searching for you."

"Is it true?"

"It is. Now you will follow me?"

"Yes."

"We are going to climb out of the cabin through a hole here in the roof."

"Yes."

"I have two friends waiting for me outside. You will be protected."

"I have no fear."

"You will have to travel some ways in the dark through the woods. Then with two friends and protectors you will journey down river in a skiff for ten miles.

"There will be rapids to run and other dangers; but you will be safe when you get there."

"I am ready."

"One thing more."

"Well?"

"I have a surprise for you outside here," and the detective laughed.

"A surprise!"

The young girl was curious.

"Yes."

"May I ask what it is?"

"The gender is masculine."

A swift wave of color suffused Victorine's fair face.

"I am ready to go," she said. "I think I understand you."

"Exactly," said Old King Brady, with a bow, "and I may add, that no Genevieve ever had a more worthy Launcelot."

With this the old detective assisted the young girl to climb up through the opening in the roof thatch.

In a few moments both stood in the outer darkness.

Old King Brady took her hand, and led her along the back of the cabin and into the forest.

Then he gave a little shrill whistle.

Footsteps were heard.

Three dark forms came hurrying up.

"All right?" whispered Young King Brady.

"Right as can be," replied the old detective.

"Good! The coast is clear."

"I am glad of that."

"But it may not be long, mates," said Thomas Henry. "If any of 'em should happen to take a look inter ther cabin, there'd be a holy row, you can bet."

But at this moment the three men stepped aside and pretended to confer.

In the darkness two forms met. There were low sounds of delighted exclamations, and the lovers were for an instant oblivious of all else in the world.

Hand pressure spoke more than words and the two Bradys, keen detectives, felt the sacred thrall of the moment.

But the young people were sensible.

They wasted but a brief moment there.

Then Ulric cried:

"We are ready, Old King Brady. You shall tell us what to do!"

"All right, my boy," cried the old detective. "You two may follow me. I will follow Thomas Henry, and Harry can bring up the rear."

"My accustomed position," said the young detective, lightly.

"Through the unkindness of fate," said Old King Brady, mischievously. "But don't lose hope."

"Never!" declared the young detective. "Some day I may lead!"

"And then I shall be glad to follow. I am getting old, Harry."

The young detective's tone changed.

"I shall never lead you," he said. "No man ever lived who could do that. But I shall hope to approach you in some of your qualities."

Old King Brady drew a deep breath, somewhat in the manner of one giving a sigh.

Sentiment was not seen on the surface of his character, but a more tender heart never beat in human breast. He was plainly touched.

The rest of the tramp to the river was in silence.

But Thomas Henry was faithful.

He brought them out with unerring skill to the very point where the skiff lay on the river bank.

"Here we are, mates!" he cried. "Now wehev only to start."

"You know the river?" asked Old King Brady.

"I ought to. I've fought every eddy and corner with logs in the freshets," replied Thomas.

By the aid of a dark lantern the skiff was launched.

Then Victorine sat in the stern and was carefully wrapped with blankets for protection against the fog.

Ulric followed and Thomas Henry took the oars.

"Good-by!" cried Old King Brady, pushing out the boat.

"When will you two gentlemen return to New York?" asked Ulric.

"When we get Jacobs."

"I hope you will succeed."

"We feel sure of it."

"So do I. Oh, I hate to leave you!" cried Ulric, impulsively. "I think I shall some day try to become a detective myself."

"Don't!" replied Old King Brady, dryly. "Detectives should not marry."

"Then I give up!" cried Ulric, and Victorine laughed merrily. Thus they glided away down the river.

The detectives now started to return to the camp. But long before they reached it they heard a tremendous uproar.

The escape of the captive girl had been discovered. Jacobs, half maddened with drink, was frantic. He had the lumbermen out with torches scouring the woods.

Everywhere the lights were flashing.

But of course no trace of Victorine or her companions was found.

The searchers were baffled.

The Bradys joined the party, and were not identified in the dark.

For hours Jacobs and his followers searched for Victorine. The doctor was nigh crazy.

But towards morning it became necessary to abandon the quest.

It was of no use.

She was gone.

It was a mystery.

But Jacobs was a maniac. He raved about the camp, cursing and yelling and vowing a hundred kinds of vengeance.

Near morning, however, with Kurd and Clark, the keepers, he retired to his own cabin. He was done out.

The Bradys crept like sleuth hounds to a crevice in the cabin wall.

They could see the interior of the hut and hear every word spoken. Jacobs was conferring with the keepers.

"What in the name of Job can have become of that girl?" he asked, for the hundredth time.

"Somebody rescued her," said Kurd.

"Who?"

"I don't know."

"But who could it be?"

"Perhaps some one in the camp, or perhaps some detective."

"Detective!"

"Yes!"

"Absurd! There is no detective in camp, nor did any follow us here."

"How do you know?"

"Know?" fumed Jacobs. "Don't you know that yourself?"

"I do not!"

"You're a fool!"

"You're another!"

"What?"

Jacobs' face was livid.

He sprung up and whirled his stool aloft. Kurd did the same.

He had been drinking and was ugly, but Clark stepped between them.

"Hold on," he said. "Don't make fools of yourselves."

"He insulted me," huskily insisted Jacobs. "He can't do that and live!"

"Humph!" exclaimed Kurd, with a shrug. "It don't look as if you would be living much longer, either."

"I—be living?" exclaimed Jacobs.

"That's what I said."

"What do you mean?"

"You're dull. Ain't we all hanging up with the noose half round our necks? I tell you we don't escape."

"Escape what?"

"The law!"

Jacobs gasped and sank down upon his stool again. He buried his face in his hands.

It was somewhat before he looked up again. Then he said savagely:

"Rum! give me some rum!"

Clark pushed a bottle across the table. The doctor drank deeply.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "That gives a man heart. My nerves are all unstrung. Curse the whole affair, I say."

"Amen!" echoed Kurd.

Jacobs turned about.

He glared at Kurd.

"I believe you're a snake," he hissed. "Everything disagrees with you."

"I should think it would," retorted Kurd. "Look at the scrape we're in. Only for this woman we'd be back in the asylum now all right."

"You're lucky not to be back in New York Tombs with Red Uno."

"It was not your fault."

Jacobs' face was purple.

There seemed to be a certainty of a row between the two. Clark this time did not interfere.

The two men glared at each other.

Jacobs' hand stole to his vest pocket.

When he drew it out it held between the fingers a fine syringe. This was not seen by Kurd.

Stealthily the cunning murderer crept toward the other.

Kurd stood his ground.

Caution seemed to have been dispelled by the fumes of the liquor. He partly arose to his feet.

Like wolves the two men faced each other.

The two Bradys watched the scene with terrible fascination, but even they had no idea of Jacobs' purpose.

They could not interfere without betraying themselves, and this would have been folly.

Slowly Jacobs crept toward Kurd.

The latter was a powerful man.

Jacobs was physically no match for him. Nearer they drew.

Then Kurd raised his big fist.

He made a blow at Jacobs.

The doctor dodged and ran in on him. Kurd felt a slight blow on the arm, and a needle prick. The blow did not hurt, but it was more deadly than the stroke of a rattlesnake.

CHAPTER XV.

WHICH IS THE END.

SATISFIED with having struck his foe Jacobs now looked out for his own safety.

He sprung to the door.

Kurd let out a yell of triumph.

"Ah, look at him run," he cried. "The coward! He dared not stand his ground."

"Shut up, Kurd!" cried Clark, who was turning into his bunk. "Let him alone! We're all in the soup together. What's the use of kicking?"

But Kurd did not answer.

He stood by the table.

He leaned upon it.

A strange expression had come over his face.

It was a ghastly grayish pallor.

He put up one hand as if to push away some frightful shape. Then he felt of his arm.

A strange stinging pain was there.

Something was coursing, hissing madly through his veins. He felt the world leaving him.

Everything took on a blood red hue. Little dancing devils played about the room.

They rushed about him.

They clung to him. His breath came in gasps, his eyes dilated.

"Kurd, what's the matter, man?" cried Clark, leaping to his feet.

"Matter!" roared the unfortunate man. "I'm doomed! That devil—he has dosed me—I am mad—mad—Oh, God! it is all over!"

Then he burst from the cabin out into the darkness, a maniac!

Down through the street of the town he went, howling and leaping and snarling.

He was a maniac.

It was the work of a fiend.

Clark was sobered in an instant.

He stood aghast in the center of the cabin floor just as a slinking form came back through the door.

It was Jacobs.

His eyes were bloodshot and tiger-like in their fury.

He glared at Clark.

"You," he hissed. "What have you to say?"

Abject terror shone in Clark's face.

He feared the demon before him.

"Served him right," he said, servilely. "I never crossed you. You know that."

Jacobs crept to his bunk.

"Now, I'm going to sleep," he hissed. "Bar that door. The fool may come back here!"

Clark obeyed. He stood white-faced and cowering before the man whom he feared more than aught else on earth.

Jacobs had begun to undress.

He threw off his coat.

But at that moment footsteps sounded outside the cabin. There came a rap on the door.

"Who is that?" snarled the doctor.

"Is Dr. Jacobs in there?"

"Yes!"

"Open the door. Here is a letter for him. The mail from Ogdensburg has just come."

Once more Jacobs was himself.

His anger seemed to fade.

He was cool and calm.

He stepped to the door and unbarred it. A tall, red-shirted lumberman put a letter into his hand.

Jacobs scanned the chirography. It did not seem familiar.

But he broke the seal.

Thus he read :

"NEW YORK CITY.

"DEAR JACOBS:—Everything is gone up. Dale has been caught and is in the Tombs. It is no longer any use to hang onto the girl. Detectives are hot after you. Get out of the country as soon as you can. From

WITTMAN."

Jacobs staggered as he read this, but yet he did not lose his nerve.

Instead, his face cleared.

"All right," he declared. "I'm glad of it. It all comes from fooling with that girl."

"If Dale had done as I told him this wouldn't have happened; we would have been all safe now."

Then he turned to Clark.

"The game is all up," he said; "we have got to get out of the country as quick as we can."

"Is that so?"

"It is."

"What have you heard?"

"Dale is in the Tombs."

"The deuce!"

"Wittman is already there. Detectives are hot after us. Do you see?"

"Yes."

"It means life or death."

"I am ready."

"What is the time?"

Clark looked at his watch.

"Five o'clock," he said. "Daylight is breaking."

"Then we must be off," cried the doctor. "Pack your grip. We will walk through by the Lake Long trail. When we reach the St. Lawrence we will be safe, but not before."

"I am with you."

Hastily the two villains packed their effects. As they emerged from their cabin, the light of day was just breaking.

The lumbermen were just going to their work.

They did not suspect the purpose of Jacobs and Clark.

They passed safely down the village street and into the forest trail.

Nothing could have suited the two Bradys better.

There was now no need of a decoy.

When their birds should get a safe distance from the camp, all that would be necessary would be to pounce upon them.

So they followed like silent shadows.

Into the forest trail.

Here they could only travel by means of blazed trees. But every step was carrying them nearer Canada.

And nearer safety.

Jacobs knew this.

Neither suspected that they were followed. But two silent shadows hung on their rear.

Through the forest arches, mile after mile they tramped on.

Noon came and they paused to rest by a bright, clear spring.

"Egad!" cried Jacobs, with some show of spirit, "I am dry and hungry. I would like a table d'hote now well enough. What say you?"

"Same here!" replied Clark. "I wish I had brought a bottle of that rum."

"I don't!"

"What?"

"I mean never to drink any more of the stuff."

Clark was amazed.

"Are you crazy!"

"Not quite!"

"What is your purpose then in adapting a temperance resolve?"

"Just this," said Jacobs. "I'm sick of the old life. I am going to reform."

"To reform!"

"Yes, hear me! It is true. I have been a wicked man all my life. But I have done with it. I am going to go into a new country, become an honest man, marry a true woman, and live the rest of my life upright and virtuous."

Clark stared at him.

"You beat me!" he declared. "I can't see the sense of that."

"Because you have not felt the spirit move you."

Clark grew white.

He looked attentively at his companion.

Was he mad? Had he taken a dose of that deadly virus himself? The keeper felt secret terror.

He did not like to be alone in that lonely spot with this man. He would have fled had he dared.

But he did not dare.

And at that moment something happened which cut short forever the aspirations of Dr. Jacobs to lead a new and reformed life.

A tall figure stepped out from behind a tree.

Pistols covered both of the villains.

"Hands up!"

They obeyed at once.

Clark was ghastly white.

But Jacobs was dogged and sullen.

Old King Brady held them under the cover of his pistols. Young King Brady appeared on the scene. He deftly handcuffed the villains.

"Stand up," said Old King Brady. "Now we will go back to New York."

"Just what I expected," said Jacobs, sullenly. "It's Dale's fault, curse him!"

Old King Brady proceeded to search the person of the asylum doctor. He took charge of the deadly syringe and a bottle of the virus.

"Mercy!" pleaded Clark, abjectly. "I am an honest man. I was forced into this."

"Shut up, you sop!" said Jacobs, who never lost his nerve. "You can't be electrocuted but once."

It was a long and tedious journey through the forest to Ogdensburg.

But in due time the detectives got there with their prisoners.

Then the chief of the Secret Service in New York received a message:

CHIEF OF SECRET SERVICE :

"Have Jacobs and another. Will be in New York day after to-morrow." **THE BRADYS.**"

It is needless to say that Gotham was electrified by the news. It was on everybody's lips.

The famous Dr. Jacobs of the asylum frauds notoriety had at last been caught.

Victorine La Salle had come back apparently from

the land of the dead, and all was due to the wonderful detective work of the Bradys.

It is needless to say that when the prisoners reached New York a crowd was on hand to give them an ovation.

But this did not happen.

Central Office men came down from Albany with the prisoners. The Bradys were not seen.

Old King Brady hated display. He was too modest to ever toot his own horn, and Young King Brady was the same.

But this did not detract from the fame or credit they received.

Case Number Ten was ended.

Victorine La Salle had been restored to her own, the villainy of Dale exposed and the awful asylum conspiracy of Jacobs, the doctor, and Wittman, the chemist, brought to an end.

Poor Kurd, after going insane from Jacobs' fiendish treatment had rushed into the river at the lumber camp and drowned himself.

Ulric Hayne and Victorine were happily married.

But they felt that they owed their happiness wholly to the two Bradys. This they will not forget.

And with this announcement the author begs leave to write

[THE END.]

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